A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School

of Cornell University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Samuel Dwinell

January 2017

BLACKNESS IN BRITISH OPERA

Samuel Dwinell, Ph.D.

Cornell University 2017

Focusing on British opera, this dissertation reassesses the relationship between British national culture and the racial systems of British society since 1945 by presenting a history of British opera that centers nonwhite lives and histories. Rather than simply asserting a connection between British opera and Britishness, this dissertation emphasizes the institutionalization of opera under the auspices of the post-World War II British welfare state as a technology of national identity. In doing so, it responds to changes in British society that followed from unprecedented, large-scale migration of nonwhite people in the second half of the twentieth century from British colonies and former colonies in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean to the imperial metropole of mainland Britain. Stated differently, it situates the history of postcolonial migration to Britain as an integral component of British opera and British national culture, thereby bringing into conversation historical themes of the postwar and the postcolonial that have often been juxtaposed but rarely integrated. By revealing empire's afterlife within the national institution of British opera, this dissertation calls attention to a widespread neglect of race in much of the scholarly literature on British opera and art-music, and it contributes a new understanding of postwar Britain's national culture as a critical site of contestation over the meaning and significance of British national identity in the postcolonial period. This dissertation argues that a racial history of British opera helps illuminate and explain the centrality of race to the British nation-state and the historical processes by which the United Kingdom has been constituted in the postwar period as a modern racial state.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Samuel Dwinell completed a Bachelors of Arts degree in Music at the University of Oxford in 2005. He then graduated from Trinity Laban College of Music and Dance with a Post-Graduate Diploma in Performance (bassoon) in 2006. He received a Masters of Arts degree in Music with a graduate minor concentration in Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies from Cornell University in 2010. In 2010–2011 he was a visiting student at Columbia University under the Exchange Scholar Program. He has taught at Cornell University as a Graduate Teaching Assistant in the Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program, a Graduate Teaching Assistant and an instructor of record in the Department of Music, and as a Visiting Lecturer in the John S. Knight Institute for Writing in the Disciplines. He lives in Akron, Ohio, where he holds the position of Assistant Professor of Instruction in the School of Music at the University of Akron.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the members of my Special Committee, Benjamin Piekut, Arthur Groos, David Rosen, and Nicholas Salvato for their guidance and support throughout the completion of this dissertation. I also wish to acknowledge those scholars whose work has sustained and challenged me, any list of whom must start by mentioning Ashley Dawson, Jed Esty, Marc Matera, Jodi Melamed, Kwesi Owusu, Anna Marie Smith, Stephen Tuck, and Imogen Tyler. In addition, I wish to thank the composer David Blake and the conductor Jonathan Butcher for their willingness to discuss details of this project with me by phone and in person. The staff of Cornell University's Sidney Cox Library of Music and Dance provided invaluable services throughout my work on this project, and I also thank the staff of the National Archives in London, the Library and Archives of the Britten–Pears Foundation in Aldeburgh, and the Black Cultural Archives in London for their gracious assistance. I also wish to thank Lisa Cutmore for her assistance in preparing the final document. It is not possible to acknowledge everyone who has had a hand in shaping this dissertation, but I would like to thank several of my friends, colleagues, and mentors who supplied intellectual, emotional, and in some cases literal nourishment. That list includes Caroline, Evan, Michael C., Natalie, John W., Wendy, Dag, Bryan, Peter, Amit, Jane, Steve M., Matt K., Brooks, and above all Rachel. Through their thoughtfulness and kindness, my sister Abigail and her husband have also made possible the completion of this dissertation, as have my parents. This dissertation is dedicated to the late Michael Tillett (1922–2009), an amanuensis and editor to the composer Michael Tippett (see Chapter 1!). I first met Michael (Tillett) in the late 1990s when he attended concerts at my secondary school, Maidstone Grammar School, of which he was an always-young "old boy." One afternoon at the Dartington Summer School in 2005, Michael listened with some bemusement to my hazy plans to earn a Ph.D. in musicology, before suggesting that such endeavors would likely bear only bitter fruit: "You'll end up writing the history of the minim rest," he warned wryly. As Michael may have been relieved to learn, this is not the history of the minim rest. Black lives matter.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

INSTITUTIONALIZING OPERA IN THE BRITISH RACIAL STATE

Legislation under the United Kingdom Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 introduced a citizenship test into U.K. nationality law for the first time in British history.[1] The citizenship test was to serve the stated purpose of proving "sufficient knowledge of British life" and "sufficient proficiency in the English language," even though it is in fact possible to take the test in Welsh or Scottish Gaelic.[2] An official study guide, *Life in the United Kingdom: A Guide for New Residents*, provides applicants with help in preparing for the test. Under the new legislation, an adult seeking Indefinite Leave to Remain in the U.K. or naturalization as a U.K. citizen must apparently receive a score of 75 percent or higher on the test in order for the U.K. government to proceed with her application. Policymakers and government spokespersons generally framed the introduction of a citizenship test into U.K. nationality law as a state response to a purported climate of insecurity and terrorism after September 11, 2001,[3] implying that "proficiency in the English language" and "knowledge of British life" evince or inspire a disinclination toward violence.

In 2013, the U.K. government changed the content of the citizenship test to reflect a new focus on the cultural, political, and social history of the British nation.[4] While earlier versions of

---

[1] See John Greenwood and Lynton Robbins, "Citizenship Tests and Education: Embedding a Concept," *Parliamentary Affairs* 55 (2002): 505–22.
[2] Jenny Wales, *Life in the United Kingdom: A Guide for New Residents*, 3rd ed. (Norwich, UK: TSO, on behalf of the Home Office, 2013), 10–11.
[3] Anne-Marie Fortier, "What's the Big Deal? Naturalisation and the Politics of Desire," *Citizenship Studies* 17, nos. 6–7 (2013): 697–711.
[4] Thom Brooks, "The British Citizenship Test: The Case for Reform," *Political Quarterly* 83 (2013): 560–66.

the test examined aspects of civic rights and procedures, such as eligibility to serve on a jury for a criminal trial, and matters of "home economics," such as how to read a domestic electricity meter, in 2013 the U.K. Minister of State for Immigration Mark Harper announced that what he called the "mundane information" of the old test material would be replaced by a revised test on British cultural history.[5] Reflecting these changes, the 2013 edition of *Life in the United Kingdom* features an account of British history that constructs "British life" via a history of the nation's culture. As the study guide explains, possible topics on the new test include Shakespeare, Monty Python, the Beatles, "British composers" (such as Henry Purcell, Benjamin Britten, and Andrew Lloyd Webber), and "our national love of gardening."[6] In light of this new focus on British culture, the advocacy group Migrants' Rights Network compared the 2013 test to an obscure initiation ritual of the British upper classes.[7] Yet, any opacity in the test may not be accidental: the recent changes to the test coincided with renewed government promises to reduce net permanent migration to Britain by placing greater obstacles to legal immigration and increasing the use of forced deportations.

The changes to the U.K. citizenship test in 2013 mean that an official form of British cultural studies now assumes a state role in adjudicating transnational mobility at the border of postcolonial Britain and contributes to the post-9/11 securitization of citizenship across European and North American nation states.[8] Under the revised version of the test, U.K. nationality and

---

[5] Quoted in Robert Booth, "Want to Become a British Citizen? Better Swot Up on Monty Python," *The Guardian*, January 27, 2013). <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2013/jan/27/british-citizenship-test>.
[6] Wales, *Life in the United Kingdom*, 82–109.
[7] Quoted in Booth, "Want to Become a British Citizen?".
[8] The U.K. citizenship test functions differently from historical precedents such as techniques for disenfranchising black voters in the U.S. south during the late nineteenth century, whereby black citizens were disbarred from voting on account of "failing" various "literacy tests," abstruse algebraic conundrums, or "general knowledge" exams; "failing" the test was seemingly the intended—and sometimes the only possible—outcome. By contrast, the U.K. citizenship test permits and even encourages the migrant-subject to "pass," as the availability of an official, comprehensive study guide and the room for error in the test's benchmark of 75 percent suggest. On technologies of

immigration law calls upon a pseudo-scholarly account of British culture as part of its prerogative to distinguish between migrants that the state deems desirable and those it deems undesirable. If "citizenship is continually being produced out of a political, rhetorical and economic struggle over who will count as 'the people' and how social membership will be measured and valued," as Lauren Berlant has argued, the U.K. citizenship test has repercussions well beyond those seeking U.K. citizenship.[9] Arguably, it shapes a dominant or official discourse of British nationalism in the twenty-first century.[10] In this way, the test and its British cultural studies syllabus institute an official definition of the affective and biopolitical parameters of British national identity.[11] While the academic discipline of British cultural studies has often claimed the mantle of anthropological description of the nation's culture (or "whole way of life," in a phrase made famous by the British cultural studies scholar Raymond Williams), U.K. nationality law now prescribes a particular body of cultural knowledge as an official template of "British life" and requires that the successful applicant for British citizenship "sufficiently" reproduce this knowledge within the context of the test.[12]

---

black disenfranchisement in the U.S., see Dewey M. Clayton, "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Voting Precinct: A Brief History of Disenfranchisement in America," *Black Scholar: Journal of Black Studies and Research* 34, no. 3 (2004): 42–52. On the securitization of citizenship in the U.S. and its "partners" (such as the U.K.) in the post-9/11 "global war on terror," see Jef Huysmans, *The Politics of Insecurity: Fear, Migration, and Asylum in the EU* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Benjamin J. Muller, "(Dis)qualified Bodies: Securitization, Citizenship and 'Identity Management,'" *Citizenship Studies* 8, no. 3 (2004): 279–294; and Nicholas De Genova, "The Production of Culprits: From Deportability to Detainability in the Aftermath of 'Homeland Security'," *Citizenship Studies* 11, no. 5 (2007): 412–48.

[9] Lauren Berlant, *The Queen of American Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 20.

[10] When the U.K. government debated changes to U.K. nationality and immigration law in 2001, a Home Office document stated: "becoming a British citizen is a significant step which should mean more than simply obtaining the right to a British passport." Quoted in Fortier, "What's the Big Deal?," 698.

[11] See Fortier, "What's the Big Deal?"; and Patricia White, "Immigrants into Citizens," *Political Quarterly* 79, no. 2 (April–June, 2008): 221–31.

[12] On British cultural studies as auto-anthropology or "ethnography in reverse," see Jed Esty, *A Shrinking Island: Modernism and National Culture in England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 182–214. On Raymond Williams and culture as a "whole way of life," see Raymond Williams, "Culture Is Ordinary [1958]," in *Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism* (London: Verso, 1989), 37–48.

A highly selective account of British music forms a central component of material on the citizenship test, according to its study guide. This official account of British culture centers whiteness within British national history and what the study guide *Life in the United Kingdom* refers to as the "modern, thriving society" of Britain today.[13] In the study guide, a rough inventory of composers, institutions, and annual events never once mentions people of color. This section of the study guide section provides short entries on the composers Henry Purcell, George Frederick Handel, Gustav Holst, Edward Elgar, Ralph Vaughan Williams, William Walton, and Benjamin Britten, as well as brief descriptions of the Last Night of the Proms annual classical music concert and the folklore and folk music festival the National Eistenddfod of Wales. For example, we learn that "Benjamin Britten (1913–76) is best known for his operas, which include *Peter Grimes* and *Billy Budd*."[14] In addition, "British pop music" is represented by references to The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, and "the Punk movement of the late 1970s."[15] Likewise, the study guide's lists of "notable British artists" and "notable authors and writers" omit altogether any British artists, authors, or writers of color.[16] In this way, the test eliminates from its account of "British life today" the entire history of nonwhite cultural production in Britain. At the same time, *Life in the United Kingdom* avoids any explicit reference to the white racial identity of the composers, artists, and writers within its highly selective canon of British "arts and culture." Thus, *Life in the United Kingdom* represents "British life" as the vanishing point of race, where people of color remain absent and whiteness is reinstated as the unspoken, essential character of the British nation-state.

---

[13] Wales, *Life in the United Kingdom*, 4.
[14] *Ibid*., 91.
[15] *Ibid*., 92.
[16] *Ibid*., 94; 98.

This dissertation takes the erasure of race in the U.K. citizenship test's official-pedagogical account of "British life" as an opportunity to reassess the relationship between British national culture and the racial systems of British society since 1945. It focuses on British opera, a category of cultural production on which *Life in the United Kingdom* leans heavily in order to construct an exclusionary image of Britain and "British life" as white. Yet, in contrast to the picture of Britain constructed by the citizenship test, this dissertation presents a history of British opera that centers nonwhite lives and histories. Moreover, rather than simply asserting a connection between British opera and Britishness (or between "Benjamin Britten" and "British life"), this dissertation emphasizes the institutionalization of opera under the auspices of the post-World War II British welfare state as a technology of national identity. In doing so, it responds to changes in British society that followed from unprecedented, large-scale migration of nonwhite people in the second half of the twentieth century from British colonies and former colonies in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean to the imperial metropole of mainland Britain. Stated differently, it situates the history of postcolonial migration to Britain as an integral component of British opera and British national culture, thereby bringing into conversation historical themes of the postwar and the postcolonial that have often been juxtaposed but rarely integrated.[17] By revealing empire's afterlife *within* the national institution of British opera, this study calls attention to a widespread neglect of race in much of the scholarly literature on British opera and art-music, and it contributes a new understanding of postwar Britain's national culture as a critical site of contestation over the meaning and significance of British national identity in the postcolonial

[17] On the uncommon historiographical collocation of the (British) postwar and the (British) postcolonial or postimperial, see Jordanna Bailkin, *The Afterlife of Empire* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012), 1–2.

period. This dissertation argues that a racial history of British opera helps illuminate and explain the centrality of race to the British nation-state and the historical processes by which the United Kingdom has been constituted in the postwar period as a modern racial state.[18]

Throughout, this dissertation stresses the importance of historical and geographical context for producing, transmitting, and challenging racialization, a procedure that, in Jodi Melamed's words, "constitutes differential relations of human value and valuelessness according to specific material circumstances and geopolitical conditions while appearing to be…a rationally inevitable normative system that merely sorts human beings into categories of difference."[19] In other words, this dissertation takes as axiomatic a conception of racial categories and categorizations as contingent upon specific conditions, and for that reason it turns and returns to the social text in order to demonstrate the reality of race and the political and ideological work of racialization.[20] During the postwar period, different segments of the British population have been racialized according to ethno-spatial categories that performatively designate certain persons as ("naturally" and "obviously") foreign or as non-British, even while such persons hold British citizenship. For instance, in the late 1940s, and 1950s and 1960s, many people of color from British colonies and former British colonies, a large proportion of whom were already British citizens by virtue of their legal status as colonial subjects, migrated to Britain, where they and their U.K.-born children would continually be labeled "West Indians,"

---

[18] On the modern racial state, see David Theo Goldberg, *The Racial State* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2002), esp. 2–4.
[19] Jodi Melamed, *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 2.
[20] As Michael Omi and Howard Winant note, "[racial categories] may be arbitrary, but they are not meaningless. Race is strategic; race does political and ideological work." Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2015), 111. As Fatima El-Tayeb elaborates, "though racializations always pretend to name natural, unchanging obvious facts, they are always ambiguous, shifting, and unstable." Fatima El-Tayeb, European Others: Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), xiii.

"Pakistanis," "Indians," "Africans," and so on.[21] As antiracist critics have noted, these ethno-spatial designations can maintain and reinforce racial exclusions by which people of color are considered "aliens from elsewhere" who do not belong in Britain. Categories of racialized persons such as these have served the interests of capital to create divisions within a nonwhite work force and thwart working-class solidarity.[22] In this context, the term *black* has often functioned in Britain since 1945 as an insurrectionary alternative to ethno-spatial ascription. As Ashley Dawson explains:

> The label *black*…came to operate primarily as a political signifier, denoting experiences of racialization and resistance shared by the African, Asian, and Caribbean settlers of the postwar period. Unlike in the United States, in other words, where *black* refers exclusively to people of African origin, in Britain the term functioned…as a form of conscious affiliation based on political solidarity. This usage helped to highlight the arbitrariness of racial categories.[23]

Likewise, this dissertation uses the terms *black* and *blackness* to refer to the racialization of formerly colonized people, their descendants, and other people of color in Britain after World War II. If *blackness* "is always an imprecise projection or designation," as Harvey Young has argued,[24] this dissertation avoids attempting scientific precision with regards to who or what "is" black or blackness. Instead, it stresses the conditions that have made blackness possible in postwar Britain, both on and off the operatic stage.

This dissertation, "Blackness in British Opera," insists on reading blackness as a constitutive feature of the British postwar and of the national culture of postwar Britain, even as

---

[21] See Kathleen Paul, *Whitewashing Britain: Race and Citizenship in the Postwar Era* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), xii.
[22] For example, see A. Sivanandan, "Race, Class, and the State: The Political Economy of Immigration [1976]," in *Catching History on the Wing: Race, Culture and Globalisation* (London: Pluto Press, 2008), 65–89.
[23] Ashley Dawson, *Mongrel Nation: Diasporic Culture and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 19. Also see Beverly Bryan, Stella Dadzie, and Suzanne Scafe, *The Heart of Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain* (London: Virago, 1985), 170.
[24] Harvey Young, *Embodying Black Experience: Stillness, Critical Memory, and the Black Body* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 7.

it attends to historical circumstances in which, as Paul Gilroy argues, "blackness and Englishness [or Britishness] appeared suddenly to be mutually exclusive attributes and where the conspicuous antagonism between them proceeded on the terrain of culture."[25] In the texts, performances, and wider culture of postwar British opera, it traces and assesses sites of convergence between blackness and Britishness, and it interprets such convergences not as supporting evidence for a satisfying theory of the inexorable "decline" of imperialism's racial hierarchies, but rather as directly related to a restructuring of racial privilege and stigma in the period of decolonization and postcolonial migration. In this study, the collocation of blackness and Britishness bespeaks the "intimate injuries" that characterize colonial modernity,[26] as well as the anticolonial-antiracist "discursive violence" that the "public celebration of being both British and black" often performs.[27] Focusing on the afterlife of empire, when Britain was redefined and reimagined as an island nation, this dissertation situates within the postwar welfare state an antagonistic and mutually constitutive relationship between blackness and Britishness. While a prerogative of welfare (or a "civilizing mission") had provided the racial project of British imperial expansion and rule with a powerful justification during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the creation of the British welfare state immediately following World War II adapted an imperialist racial project by reinventing Britain as a putatively cohesive island nation, as well as by

---

[25] Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 10. Here, it is worth noting that, as Robert Young argues, "the dutiful use of the term 'British' rather than 'English'…misses the point that in terms of power relations there is no difference between them: 'British' is the name imposed by the English on the non-English." Robert J.C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995), 3.

[26] On the "intimate injuries" of empire, see Laura Ann Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010), xvii. Also see Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015); and Ann Laura Stoler, "Intimidations of Empire: Predicaments of the Tactile and Unseen," in *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History*, ed. Ann Laura Stoler (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 1–22.

[27] Timothy Brennan, "Black Theorists and Left Antagonists," *Minnesota Review* 37 (Fall 1991): 89–113; 102.

transplanting racial boundaries and imperial intimacies to within the borders of mainland Britain.[28] The postwar "reconstruction" of Britain under the welfare state compelled state interests in managing and enriching the lives of British people, even as it ratified a national political economy that "coincided with the super-exploitation of black workers and the total failure of the welfare state to assume any responsibility for the immigrant populations."[29] This dissertation analyzes blackness in British opera by defining "British opera" as a discursive and institutional category of the British welfare state and by situating blackness as both antagonist and constituent of postwar national reconstruction.

This critical introduction has three parts. The first provides the historical premise for my definition of the term *British opera* as a category of the postwar British welfare state. It discusses the founding of the Arts Council of Great Britain by the British economist, policymaker, and opera- and ballet-lover John Maynard Keynes (1883–1946) in 1946, and it describes how Keynes established the Arts Council of Great Britain as a government-funded body tasked with allocating public funds to client organizations involved in producing or curating "the fine arts." The Arts Council and the system of public arts funding that it inaugurated were responsible for consolidating and supporting British opera as a category of cultural production under the auspices of the postwar British welfare state. The second part returns to the "intimacies of empire" in order to account more fully for the vexed relationship between blackness and Britishness in the postwar/postcolonial period. This part reiterates how the postwar British welfare state depended on the super-exploitation of postcolonial black labor, but it also urges a

[28] Bailkin, *The Afterlife of Empire*, 2–3.
[29] Anna Marie Smith, *New Right Discourse on Race and Sexuality: Britain, 1968–1990* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 137.

reconsideration of the British welfare state's management of race during the entire postwar period, from 1945 to the present. While much of the scholarly literature on the topic "race and the state" has perhaps reified an image of postwar British governance as concerned solely or chiefly with adhering to exclusionary concepts of white Britishness that disavow the labor and presence of British people of color, this part rehearses antiracist critiques that have emphasized the British state's more explicit, material and rhetorical investments in blackness. After identifying the postwar British state's racial projects in this way, the introduction proceeds to a third and final part, which describes each of the dissertation's four subsequent chapters as a case study of the cultural politics of blackness that the category of British opera made possible.

British Opera as Public Culture

A history of British (or English) opera may have seemed like a puzzling concept to Benjamin Britten, perhaps the best-known British opera composer of the twentieth century. Writing to his amanuensis Imogen Holst (daughter of the British composer Gustav Holst) a few weeks after the first performance of his opera *Peter Grimes* in June 1945 at London's Sadler's Wells theatre, Britten expressed both joy and surprise in what he, as well as several influential voices in the national newspapers, felt had been the success of the production.[30] He envisioned a future of British opera, but seemed to see little of note in its history:

> I think the occasion is actually a greater one than either Sadler's Wells or me, I feel. Perhaps it is an omen for English Opera in the future. Anyhow I hope that many composers will take the plunge, & I hope that they'll find as I did the water not quite so icy as expected.[31]

[30] On the performance history and critical reception of Britten's *Peter Grimes*, see Paul Banks, *The Making of Peter Grimes: Essays and Studies* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2000).
[31] Benjamin Britten, *Letters from a Life: Selected Diaries and Letters of Benjamin Britten*, eds. Donald Mitchell and Philip Read, vol. 2: 1939–1945 (London: Faber and Faber, 1991), 1268.

Britten's comments in 1945 proved prophetic in that the premiere of *Peter Grimes* would serve as a model—*the* model, in fact—of British national opera composition and performance for a system of public arts funding that was developed in prototype during World War II, inaugurated under the auspices of the new Arts Council for Great Britain in 1946, and continues to this day. Moreover, numerous British composers of opera since 1945 have looked to Britten, to Britten's operatic works, and often to *Peter Grimes* specifically as a blueprint for a successful synthesis of opera and Britishness.[32] Several broad features of *Peter Grimes* and its premiere would characterize many works subsequently composed and performed under the sign of "British opera" since 1945: Britten's score is written for professional opera singers (singers trained in and familiar with the international repertory of opera, rather than in musical theatre) and uses an English-language libretto, source material by a British author, and a setting located within the British Isles, while the work was treated to a professional production that defrayed some of its costs with public subsidy.[33] For his part, Britten later composed over a dozen more operas, many of which share these textual features and all of which were premiered in Britain in a professional production supported by British government funds.[34] Furthermore, though no definition of

[32] Michael Kennedy, "Britten's Operas: 20 Years On," *Opera* 47 (September 1996): 1004–11. Also see Christopher Mark, "Opera in England: Taking the Plunge," in *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Opera*, ed. Mervyn Cooke (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 209–22. As Irene Morra notes, "with *Peter Grimes*…Britten granted the nationalist assertion of cultural heritage through music a contemporary artistic relevance." Irene Morra, *Twentieth-Century British Authors and the Rise of Opera in Britain* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 5.

[33] The wartime Council for the Encouragement of Music (CEMA) had provided essential funding and financial insurance for Sadler's Wells during the Second World War. See Susie Gilbert, *Opera for Everybody: The Story of English National Opera* (London: Faber and Faber, 2011), 71–72.

[34] Details of the first performances of Britten's operas are given in Michael Kennedy, *Britten*, rev. ed. (London: J.M. Dent, 1993), 287–88. Even the premiere of *The Rape of Lucretia*—in 1946 at Glyndebourne by the Glyndebourne English Opera Company—relied on public funds. Although the Glyndebourne English Opera Company had failed in its bid to attract funding from the new Arts Council of Great Britain, the Council nevertheless granted the company a limited guarantee against loss on the production of *Lucretia*. See Paul Francis Kildea, *Selling Britten: Music and the Marketplace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 77.

British opera can be watertight, British operas composed and premiered by a professional British opera company since *Peter Grimes* now number over one hundred, in no small part due to the emphasis placed on commissioning new operas by policies and practices of public funding that have been in place since the founding of the Arts Council in 1946.[35] As Irene Morra suggests, "not only had *Peter Grimes* achieved unprecedented national and international success, but it had also helped to define opera as the source of British musical creativity."[36]

Britten's opinion of the (non-)history of British opera prior to 1945 resembles a long-held historiographical evaluation of opera composition in Britain.[37] While an untold number of operas were indeed composed and premiered in Britain since the seventeenth century, music historians have often described a lack of any significant or enduring tradition or school of opera composition in Britain before *Peter Grimes*. Scholars of British opera culture, such as Jennifer Hall-Witt, have documented the central social role played by performance and reception of Italian, French, and German—but not British—opera in London during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[38] Furthermore, the scholarly literature on British opera composition before 1945 typically emphasizes individual works, such as Purcell's opera *Dido and Aeneas* (performed around 1689), individual composers, such as Handel (1685–1759), and individual institutions, such as the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, for which many light operas by W. S. Gilbert (1836–1911) and Arthur Sullivan (1842–1900) were commissioned. A recent (and rare)

---

[35] One (very) incomplete list is given in Nigel Simeone, "A Chronology of Twentieth-Century Operatic Premiers," in Mervyn Cooke, *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Opera* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), xviii–xlvii.
[36] Morra, *Twentieth-Century British Authors and the Rise of Opera in Britain*, 54.
[37] For example, see Andrew Blake, *The Land Without Music: Music, Culture and Society in Twentieth-century Britain* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1997).
[38] See Jennifer Hall-Witt, *Fashionable Acts: Opera and Elite Culture in London, 1780–1880* (Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2007). Also see William Weber, "Redefining the Status of Opera: London and Leipzig, 1800–1848," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 36, no. 3 (Winter 2006): 507–32.

study of opera composition, performance, and reception in Britain in the *longue durée*, Paul Rodmell's *Opera in the British Isles, 1875–1918*, corroborates the conclusion that a "failure to establish a nation of opera-lovers and [a] canon of British operas" during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries resulted primarily from "the domination of London by foreign opera (repertory, conductors, and singers)…the rise of operetta and musical comedy, and the lack of trained native musicians who could create and promote an original product."[39] Britten's view of pre-1945 Britain as lacking a tradition of opera composition was not simply a historiographical ruse within a self-fulfilling tale of his own operatic ingenuity, but a fairly sound summarization of British opera history.

Attempts throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to create a lively and secure British school of opera composition were perhaps as numerous as they were ultimately unsuccessful. For instance, a pamphlet produced in London in 1902 highlighted what its author, one William Galloway, termed "the operatic problem" in Britain; in the pamphlet, Galloway maintained that since the birth of opera in the early seventeenth century "England alone in civilised Europe remained indifferent, and took no active part either in fostering or patronising the new form of art [opera]…England was satisfied to import spectacles and performers from abroad, just as she would have imported any other commodity."[40] Galloway's desire to solve England's "operatic problem" by building the institutional scaffolding for a new school of British opera echoed several similar suggestions made in the previous decades and were widely discussed at the time, including in debates at the House of Commons, yet his proposals for national, government-funded opera institutions, such as opera houses and training colleges,

[39] Paul Rodmell, *Opera in the British Isles, 1875–1918* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 1.
[40] William Galloway, *The Operatic Problem* (1902), quoted in Rodmell, *Opera in the British Isles*, 185–86.

would not be heeded.[41] Opera-goers in Britain generally were too invested in opera as foreign spectacle for any popular movement in support of British opera to develop, while the political or governmental will to establish institutions for the composition and performance of home-grown, native operas remained practically nonexistent. In sum, during this period the notion of home-grown British opera would likely have seemed totally incompatible with the general tenor of London's cultural offerings; as John Ball argues, the imperial metropolis had become a dazzling "fountainhead of culture" that "projected itself as the centre of the world."[42] Thus, it is perhaps not surprising that one of more significant, if also somewhat anomalous, institutional innovations designed to foster a British opera tradition before 1945 took place not in a British city but near the small Somerset town of Glastonbury in the heart of the English countryside, where the composer Rutland Boughton (1878–1960) ran the short-lived Glastonbury Festival rather sporadically from 1914 to 1925 as a summer school, a venue for performances of new British operas, and an attempt to form a socialist-utopian answer to Bayreuth.[43]

Although Boughton's attempt to found a British school of opera composition and performance at Glastonbury did not prove directly influential on later developments in establishing British opera institutions, his experiments in the English countryside in the 1910s and 1920s presaged epochal changes to elite conceptions of British national culture in approximately the middle third of the twentieth century. As the literary and cultural studies scholar Jed Esty has argued, the period from the 1930s to the 1960s witnessed the consolidation

---

[41] See Rodmell, *Opera in the British Isles*, 185–220.
[42] John C. Ball, *Postcolonial Fiction and the Transnational Metropolis* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 4.
[43] See Michael Hurd, "The Glastonbury Festivals," *Musical Times* 125, no. 1698 (August 1984): 435–37; and Percy Lovell, "The Proposed National Opera House at Glastonbury, 1913–15," *Music and Letters* 50, no. 1 (January 1969): 172–79.

of a resurgent concept of British national culture that "actively manage[d] the cultural transition between empire and welfare state."[44] Esty suggests that as Britain's grip on its vast colonial holdings began to falter in the 1930s, older notions of British imperial greatness seemed increasingly less persuasive. Instead, British cultural elites—Esty discusses literary writers such as Virginia Woolf, E.M. Forster, and T.S. Eliot, as well as Keynes, whose essays and public talks in the 1930s included meditations on art and culture—looked inward to what they identified as native British forms and content as the basis for both social and aesthetic renewal.[45] In this way, the loss of empire became an opportunity for a literary production of British "nativism" and "cultural repair," as orientalist narratives featuring colonial settings and scenarios began in the 1930s to yield to new conceptions of native British national culture.[46]

Esty's focus on changes to literary culture prompts questions about a wider British public and popular culture. Applied to the history of British opera, the emergence of an Anglocentric nativism around the 1930s helps contextualize not only Boughton's early experiments in Glastonbury, but also the appearance of more institutionalized attempts to found a British national opera tradition. For example, in 1931 the opening of the new Sadler's Wells theatre in London was hailed by the influential music critic Edward J. Dent as heralding "the establishment of a permanent English Opera House," by which he primarily meant the performance of German and Italian opera with translated, English-language libretti: "the tunes of [Puccini's] *Madam Butterfly* and [Leoncavallo's] *Pagliacci*," he declared, "would be hummed from Islington [in north London] to Streatham Hill [in south London], and whistled by every errand boy from

[44] See Esty, *A Shrinking Island*, 2–3.
[45] *Ibid*., 3.
[46] *Ibid*., 7.

Peckham to Camden Town."[47] A British national culture emerged at this time within popular domains and registers, too; for instance, Esty's work might help explain the rapid decline of "Empire Day" celebrations in schools and streets across Britain during the 1930s and 1940s.[48] As Esty argues, the national culture crafted by British elites in the mid twentieth century entailed not simply a "recovered cultural particularity," but also a revised conception of the relationship between culture and wider, national society: it "deemphasize[d] the redemptive agency of art, which, because of its social autonomization, operates unmoored from any given national sphere, and…promote[d] instead the redemptive agency of culture, which is restricted by national or ethnolinguistic borders."[49] In this way, an insular redefinition of the British nation in the mid-twentieth century was conceived in terms of a democratization of culture and a cross-class cohesion within the body politic of the British island nation, setting in motion the emphasis on national arts and culture within the postwar British welfare state as well as what Stuart Hall refers to as the "profound historical forgetfulness" of Empire in the postcolonial period.[50]

A resurgent concept of British national culture animated the writing and thinking of perhaps the singular most important architect of the postwar British welfare state, John Maynard Keynes. Beginning his career as a civil servant in India Office of the British Empire, Keynes emerged in the 1910s as a noted scholar and international expert in the fields of probability theory and macroeconomic financial regulation and control, before taking up an official government position in Treasury in 1915 and serving a British representative to the Versailles

---

[47] Quoted in Susie Gilbert, *Opera for Everybody*, 43.
[48] See Jim English, "Empire Day in Britain, 1904–1958," *Historical Journal* 49, no. 1 (March 2006): 247–76. In the U.K., Empire Day was introduced in 1904 and renamed "Commonwealth Day" in 1958.
[49] Esty, *A Shrinking Island*, 2–3.
[50] Stuart Hall, "Racism and Reaction," in *Five Views of Multi-Racial Britain: Talks on Race Relations Broadcast by BBC TV*, ed. David Lane (London: Commission for Racial Equality, 1978), 23–35; 30.

peace conference of 1919. In the 1920s and 1930s, Keynes published a series of treatises on economic policy (most famously *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* of 1936), writings which were studied by policymakers in both the U.K. and the U.S. and adopted into government legislation on both side of the Atlantic.[51]

In addition, Keynes was also something of an aesthete. Invested in opera and ballet through his associations with the Bloomsbury Group, a queer, mid-century set of artists and performers based in the Bloomsbury district of central London, Keynes approached macroeconomics and financial regulation as tasks that presented unique and engaging opportunities for training a national economy toward the pursuit of the good life.[52] It was the performing arts, Keynes argued in the 1930s, that best served to satisfy "the human craving for solidarity," whereas the greatest feats of publicly funded national culture in Britain had lamentably been limited so far to "arterial roads."[53] Rather than privately consumed cultural forms, such as poetry and literary fiction, Keynes championed the social practices of public ritual, always with the view that government action was needed in the aftermath of the Great Depression to shepherd national populations away from fascist ceremonies of the kind that appeared at the time in Germany.[54] As Keynes wrote in "Art and the State" (1936), "Architecture is the most public of the arts, the least private in its manifestations and the best suited to give form and body to civic pride in the sense of social unity. Music comes next; then the various arts

---

[51] See Roger E. Backhouse and Bradley W. Bateman, "A Cunning Purchase: The Life and Works of Maynard Keynes," in *The Cambridge Introduction to Keynes*, eds. Roger E. Backhouse and Bradley W. Bateman (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1–18.
[52] See Bill Mauer, "Redecorating the National Economy: Keynes, Grant, and the Queering of Bretton Woods," in *Queer Globalizations: Citizenship and the Afterlife of Colonialism*, eds. Arnaldo Cruz-Malave and Martin F. Manalansan (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 100–33. Also see David A.J. Richards, *The Rise of Gay Rights and the Fall of the British Empire: Liberal Resistance and the Bloomsbury Group* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
[53] Quoted in Esty, *A Shrinking Island*, 177.
[54] *Ibid*., 177.

of the theater."[55] Keynes had been a keen opera-goer throughout his adulthood,[56] and given opera's amalgam of music and theatre, as well as its association with the civic architecture of the opera house, it is not surprising that when he first put his proposals for public culture into practice he ensured that opera received substantial government support.

Keynes began to put this cultural theory into practice during the Second World War. As head of the wartime Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA), he prioritized granting government funding to opera companies.[57] Seemingly unconcerned with apparent conflicts of interest, he was also chairman of the Covent Garden organizing committee and later of the Trustees of the Royal Opera House. Keynes and CEMA became involved in a scheme for national opera and ballet companies associated with the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. In July 1945, the electoral victory of the Labour Party established a political mandate for the large-scale assembly of a British welfare state, which would retain and adapt institutional and bureaucratic apparatus and networks from a war effort that had engulfed British governance for the last five years. Under the welfare state, the attempt to bring about national cross-class cohesion would entail the nationalization of British industry and public transportation, the founding of the National Health Service, the public funding of all levels of education, and a system of public funding for the arts that was inherited from wartime. Thus, immediately after the end of the Second World War, Keynes presided over the transformation of CEMA into the Arts Council of Great Britain, which he briefly headed before his death in 1946; in doing so, he secured for the new Arts Council a three-fold increase in public funds compared to CEMA's

[55] *Ibid*., 177.
[56] D.E. Moggridge, "Keynes, the Arts, and the State," *History of Political Economy* 37, no. 3 (2005): 535–55.
[57] *Ibid*.

operating budget and protected the Council's future by bestowing it with a revenue stream that came directly from the Treasury, thereby bypassing the Board (later Ministry) of Education which had funded CEMA.[58] The devastation to British infrastructure wrought by the blitz provided an opportunity for planners and policymakers such as Keynes to begin projecting new forms of social practice, national belonging and the orchestration of optimal society.[59] Yet, the new Arts Council, Keynes hoped, would operate independently from government bureaucracy in order to provide artists and arts organizations with facilities, advice, and funding, while shielding them from the kind of state "plutocracy" that Keynes claimed to abhor.[60] As he wrote in a press release on the occasion of Council's founding in 1946: "Let every part of Merry England be merry in its own way. Death to Hollywood."[61] Keynes was thus keen to emphasize the independence of cultural policy from government,[62] yet the cultural production the state supported through the Arts Council was nevertheless still supposed to communicate both the abundance and the particularity of British culture.

In this way, public performances of music held a privileged place in Britain within "a project of cultural renewal that occupied artists, critics, and planners in the wake of the Second World War," as Heather Wiebe has demonstrated.[63] Indeed, within a postwar commitment to concepts of native national British culture, an invented tradition of opera performance perhaps

---

[58] As Moggridge writes, the Arts Council of Great Britain "began life with a budget of £320,000—a far cry from the £100,000 he had for his first year with CEMA." Moggridge, "Keynes, the Arts, and the State," 538.
[59] See Richard Hornsey, *The Spiv and the Architect: Unruly Life in Postwar London* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 15.
[60] See Anna Upchurch, "John Maynard Keynes, the Bloomsbury Group and the Origins of the Arts Council Movement," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 10, no. 2 (July 2004): 203–17; 215. Keynes briefly headed the Arts Council before his death in 1946.
[61] The Arts Council of Great Britain, *First Annual Report, 1945–6* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1946).
[62] See Upchurch, "John Maynard Keynes."
[63] Heather Wiebe, *Britten's Unquiet Pasts: Sound and Memory in Postwar Reconstruction* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 1.

represented the most significant of the Arts Council's achievements. Not only had opera performance existed only in piecemeal form before the war; under the auspices of the new Arts Council, opera production companies would receive the lion's share of government arts funding, at least during the Council's first three decades.[64] Imagined by Keynes as a fundamentally collaborative and public form of cultural production, and as an occasion for a closely packed if also organized and orderly form of collective experience for its audiences, opera could serve as a nodal point in the spatial and social orchestration of British daily life. Drawing on other arms of the welfare state, such as public transportation, the theatrical event of opera performance could be used in order effectively to maneuver and manage the proper movement of bodies within national space.[65]

While Keynes had emphasized the national importance of performances of existing opera, the prevailing view among policymakers at the Arts Council and arts administrators in Britain's opera companies after Keynes's death supplemented this emphasis with the goal also of fostering a native school of opera composition; less an opera expert than a keen consumer of elite metropolitan culture, Keynes had surely attended few if any British operas during his forty years as an opera-goer in the first half of the twentieth century. The essay that introduces the Arts Council's *Fist Annual Report, 1945–6*—published at the time as a publicly available volume—signals an additional preoccupation with British opera: new compositions by British composers. As the essay states, the "formation of the Arts Council" and its "long-term policies" will be

[64] See Andrew Sinclair, *Arts and Cultures: The History of the 50 Years of the Arts Council of Great Britain* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1995); and Eric Walter White, *The Arts Council of Great Britain* (London: Davis-Poynter, 1975).

[65] For example, at one stage in the 1960s the Arts Council provided reimbursements for the bus or train fare to provincial opera-goers living in commuting distance of the capital. See ACGB/36/6, Minutes of the 144th Meeting of the Arts Council of Great Britain, 26th May, 1962.

inspired in part by the premiere of *Peter Grimes*: "Two events of international significance have been the performance of Benjamin Britten's new opera *Peter Grimes* at Sadler's Wells in the summer of 1945 and the opening of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, in February, 1946. Both give evidence of the native vigour of British enterprise and of the lively goodwill ready to greet it."[66] The construction of the postwar welfare state shaped and was shaped by the invention of "British opera" as a putatively cogent and coherent category of cultural production.[67]

As a result of postwar cultural policies inaugurated by Keynes in 1946, the professional performance of new opera would flourish in postwar Britain at the same time that the continental avant-garde and the global mass culture industry alike would consider the genre defunct. For example, while the influential and iconoclastic British theatre director Peter Brook was busy in the 1960s publicly denouncing opera as representing everything that was wrong with theatre, in the three decades after 1945 state-funded opera companies in Britain consistently performed around three new operas a year, including thirteen by Benjamin Britten and four by the British composer Michael Tippett (1905–1998).[68] On the one hand, the Britishness of postwar British opera ensues from the effects of national(ist) institutionalization. Drawing on J. L. Austin's speech act theory of "performative utterances," Phillip Rupprecht writes:

> To perform something designated publicly as "British music" in the familiar institutional setting of a concert is, at one level, to enact British identity. When audiences accept Elgar's post-Wagnerian idiom as the quintessential expression of late-empire Britain, or hear Vaughan Williams's *A Pastoral Symphony* (inspired by the landscape of wartime France and influenced by Ravel's teaching) as evocative of a particularly English version of pastoral, their interpretive

---

[66] The Arts Council of Great Britain, *First Annual Report, 1945–6* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1946), 3; 11.
[67] See John Caldwell, *The Oxford History of English Music*, Volume Two (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
[68] On Peter Brook and postwar British opera, see Christopher Chowrimootoo, "Bourgeois Opera: *Death in Venice* and the Aesthetics of Sublimation," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 22, no. 2 (July, 2010): 175–216.

> behaviors confirm both the force of nationalist ideology and its essential arbitrariness of signification.[69]

On the other hand, however, British opera after 1945 registers the insularity and nativism of a resurgent national British culture via verbal language: new British operas invariably used an English-language libretto, clearly differentiating them from the more standard (largely Italian and German) works in the international operatic repertory. Furthermore, many new British operas in this period depict British settings, including settings that thematize the nation's island-bound (or insular) geography (such as the seaside fishing village in *Peter Grimes*), as opposed to representations of national space and identity that feature the expansive and expansionist reach of Empire. While the Britishness of postwar British opera may be signified by "essentially arbitrary" characteristics and elements, it often cleaved to a resurgent concept of national culture that it shared with literary and other elite cultural production in the mid twentieth century.

As a component of mid-twentieth-century Anglocentrism, British opera and art-music more generally since 1945 have recently been characterized as reproducing an insular white Britishness, purged of narratives of imperial encounter and rule, and separate from the mainland British conditions of postcoloniality, such as postcolonial black migration and the shifting arrangements of the postwar British racial state.[70] While the literature on British opera and art-music has often avoided mentioning issues of race, scholars more recently have sometimes examined racial dimensions of British opera and art-music in the postwar period. Heather Wiebe,

---

[69] Phillip Rupprecht, "'Something Slightly Indecent': British Composers, the European Avant-garde, and National Stereotypes in the 1950s," *Musical Quarterly* 91, nos. 3–4 (2008): 275–326; 280.

[70] For example, see Jean Marie Hoover, "Constructions of National Identities: Opera and Nationalism in the British Isles," Ph.D. Dissertation (University of Rochester, 1999); Nathaniel Geoffrey Lew, "A New and Glorious Age: Constructions of National Opera in Britain, 1945–1951," Ph.D. dissertation (University of California, Berkeley, 2001); Morra, *Twentieth-Century British Authors and the Rise of Opera in Britain*; and Heather Wiebe, "Benjamin Britten, the 'National Faith,' and the Animation of History in 1950s England," *representations* 93 (Winter 2006), 76–105.

for example, suggests that while Britten's opera *Noye's Fludde* (1958) remains "preoccupied as it is with defining a new and in some respects inclusive community on the ground of a reimagined English cultural past," its score and the educational project for which the opera was intended in 1958 renders the contemporaneous social text of postcolonial Britain, including in particular the "race riots" in London and Nottingham in the summer of that year, "utterly erased."[71] Wiebe's reading of Britten's *Noye's Fludde* considers the material changes and social antagonisms that attended to postcolonial migration to Britain in the postwar decades, yet it cannot account for a relationship between British postcoloniality and the public culture of postwar Britain other than that of "utter eras[ure]." Wiebe makes Britten's opera seem all too successful in the task of constructing an Anglocentric concept of white British national culture. Adopting a similar perspective, Melanie Marshall has recently analyzed the boom in "historically informed performance" of English medieval, renaissance, and baroque vocal music during the 1970s and 1980s as "akin to a sound of white Britishness" in its concern with a "discourse [of] purity in early music."[72] Like Wiebe's analysis of Britten's *Noye's Fludde*, Marshall's account of the early music movement in Britain traces a disconnect between postwar British music and the conditions of British postcoloniality.

While Wiebe's and Marshall's approach unveils the specificity of postwar British opera and art-music by noting the racial and other exclusions of the same, it risks reifying an already potent and all-too-common image of postwar British national culture as evacuated of postcolonial black migrants and other people of color. As such, their writing on these topics does

[71] Wiebe, "Benjamin Britten," 98–99.
[72] Melanie L. Marshall, "*Voce Bianca*: Purity and Whiteness in British Early Music Vocality," *Women & Music* 19 (2015): 36–44.

little to challenge a view of British national culture—such as that of the U.K. citizenship test—that erases the work, lives, labor, and ideas of nonwhite people; Wiebe and Marshall both remark astutely on this kind of Anglocentric racial erasure, but their analysis proceeds as if the performative whiteness of postwar British national culture has not always been prone to failure, fragility, and contestation. Indeed, as Jordanna Bailkin notes bluntly, "it is no revelation to say that welfare [in postwar Britain] was discriminatory, or that its achievements fell short of its universal claims."[73] The heuristic of mid-twentieth-century Anglocentrism distills the relationship between British imperialism and nativist British nationalism to one of antecedent and consequent, where the afterlife of empire in British national culture during the period after 1945 remains conspicuous simply by its absence.

More frequently, however, the scholarly literature overlooks the racial dimensions of British opera and art-music and disregards the role of people of color as producers and consumers of music, an omission that seems to have occurred despite rigorous and pioneering inquiry into relationships between postwar British art-music and other arrangements of the social text, such as gender and sexuality.[74] If "black Britain was *performed* into being, deliberately conjured by artists and intellectuals," as Michael Eldridge has argued, musicologists have rarely attended to such performances within domains of British opera and art-music.[75] Instead, concepts of "musical orientalism" now commands a dominant and immensely oversized position in musicological studies that consider race, ethnicity, and imperialism, especially studies of British

[73] Bailkin, *The Afterlife of Empire*, 5.
[74] For example, see Philip Brett's early essay on male homosexuality in *Peter Grimes*. Philip Brett, "Britten and Grimes," *Musical Times* 118, no. 1618 (Dec., 1977): 995–1000.
[75] Michael Eldridge, "The Rise and Fall of Black Britain," *Transition* 74 (1997): 32–43; 34.

opera and art-music.[76] Within such studies, Edward Said's emphasis in *Orientalism* (1977) on "the internal consistency of Orientalism and its ideas about the Orient (the East as career) despite or beyond any correspondence, or lack thereof, with a 'real' Orient"[77] has too often seemingly been taken as a justification for disregarding the colonized lives, labor, and agency that Said himself admitted that he had "left out of *Orientalism*"—for example, the labor that Said refers to as "the great movement of decolonization all across the Third World."[78] As "musical orientalism" becomes confined to particular aspects of textual representation, studies of "musical orientalism" ironically often threaten to explain away blackness in opera and art-music, thereby (re)positioning colonized persons and people of color as extrinsic to musicology's proper objects.[79] To be sure, concepts of orientalism and exoticism offer a useful shorthand for (in Said's words) a world-embracing "political vision of reality" that is instantiated as much by cultural artifacts of Western modernity as by the racial terror of imperialist conquest and domination.[80] And several recent studies of music and orientalism have helped to identify colonial discourse within the putatively post-imperial eras of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.[81] But the application of orientalist critique (or colonial discourse analysis) in

[76] On orientalism in British opera and art-music, see, for example, Martin Clayton and Bennett Zon, eds., *Music and Orientalism in the British Empire, 1780s-1940s: Portrayal of the East* (Burlingon, VT: Ashgate, 2007); and Rachel Cowgill and Julian Rushton, eds., *Europe, Empire, and Spectacle in Nineteenth-century British Music* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006).
[77] Edward Said, *Orientalism* [1978] (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 5.
[78] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Random House, 1993), xii.
[79] This formulation is indebted to Nyong'o's critique of the "convenient definition of rock as black music played by white people." Tavia Nyong'o, "'Rip It Up': Excess and Ecstasy in Little Richard's Sound," in *Black Performance Theory*, ed. Thomas F. DeFrantz and Anita Gonzalez (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 169–183; 171.
[80] Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 42.
[81] For example, see W. Anthony Sheppard, "Orientalism in the Postmodern Operas of Adams and Sellars," in *Representation in Western Music*, ed. Joshua S. Walden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 267–286.

musicology has rarely centered the colonized and people of color, despite the programmatic emphasis on race and ethnicity in many musicological studies of orientalism.[82]

The relative absence of anti-racist and anti-colonialist critique in academic musicology, including studies of "musical orientalism," makes it possible to dismiss colonial discourse analysis of music as inherently unproductive. For example, Jonathan Bellman argues that Saidian critique risks introducing what he calls a "nonmusical agenda," as if historical-musicological research has in fact often demonstrated responsibilities to marginalized communities and the voices and organized movements of the same, and as if, as Philip Bohlman reminds us, musicology is not always already a "political act."[83] Bellman claims that:

> Music criticism based on Orientalist currents [i.e. based ostensibly on Saidian colonial discourse analysis] is not necessarily wrong, but its applicability is too limited, methodologically and culturally, to be broadly useful. Musical transculturation itself probably dates back to the first intentional sounding of vocal or instrumental pitches for pleasure or art, to the first time a primitive human found another's music interesting or alluring, and it goes in all directions: master to slave (and vice versa), colonizer and colonized (and vice versa), north–south and east–west (and vice versa), majority–minority (and vice versa). The real imperative, to my mind, is to fashion some critical approaches and vocabularies that do not disfigure their musical–cultural subjects by engaging them only in the context of a particular nonmusical agenda.[84]

It is precisely the agency of the colonized—agency which Leela Ghandi refers to as that of "anticolonial actors, especially such as might have performed their political vocation impatiently from within imperial culture, unwilling to wait for its eventual hybridization, actively

---

[82] Rachel Beckles Willson, *Orientalism and Musical Mission: Palestine and the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 4–15.
[83] On musicology as "political act," see Philip V. Bohlman, "Musicology as Political Act," *Journal of Musicology* 11, no. 4 (Autumn, 1993): 411–436.
[84] Jonathan D. Bellman, "Musical Voyages and Their Baggage: Orientalism in Music and Critical Musicology," *Musical Quarterly* 94 (2011): 417–438; 434–435.

renouncing, refusing, and rejecting categorically its aggressive Manicheanism"—that Bellman's glib condemnation of colonial discourse analysis in musicology obscures.[85]

Despite the relative absence of attention to race and ethnicity in the scholarship on British opera and art-music, the scholarly literature on black popular music in Britain since 1945 has grown expansively over at least the last three decades, in no small part due to the central role of both race and popular culture in British cultural studies since the 1970s.[86] Much of this literature on black British popular music evinces a methodology that analyzes black popular music as subversively resistant to the exclusions of the modern British racial state, often leaving elite culture out of the picture altogether. By contrast, Paul Gilroy's frequently cited study *The Black Atlantic* (1993) weaves rare discussions of European (white) philosophy and opera into its analysis of black writers, thinkers, and musicians, yet Gilroy's concept of "hybridity," which he expounds throughout *The Black Atlantic*, has not often been developed by subsequent studies of black British music.

The Black Atlantic situates music as central to resistant practices of belonging among British people of color throughout the twentieth century and especially in the postwar era. As Gilroy writes, "the musics of the black Atlantic world were the primary expressions of cultural distinctiveness which [black Britons] seized upon and adapted to its new circumstances."[87] Forms of black-diasporic music such as calypso, blues, reggae, soul, and hip-hop "appear[ed] in Britain through a circulatory system that gave a central place to the musics which had both

---

[85] Leela Ghandi, *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin-de-Siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 5–6.
[86] See Claire Alexander, "Stuart Hall and 'Race,'" *Cultural Studies* 23, no. 4 (2009): 457–482; Ben Carrington, "Improbable Grounds: The Emergence of the Black British Intellectual," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 109, no. 2 (2010): 369–389; and Michelle Stephens, "New Points of Recognition: Stuart Hall's Gift to the Study of Blackness," *Small Axe* 19, no. 1 (2015): 88–99.
[87] Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 81–82.

informed and recorded black struggles in other places… [and] were rearticulated in distinctively European conditions."[88] As such, *The Black Atlantic* undertakes a sophisticated critique of the "hybrid character" of black Atlantic/black British music, a hybridity that betrays the non-empiricism of blackness or black identity: "the unashamedly hybrid character of… black Atlantic cultures," Gilroy argues, "continually confounds any simplistic… understanding of the relationship between racial identity and racial non-identity, between folk cultural authenticity and pop culture betrayal."[89] Gilroy's notions of hybridity and racial non-essentialism in *The Black Atlantic* contain echoes of his earlier work on reggae in Britain during the 1970s in his *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* (1987). Here, Gilroy explains how reggae music provided a vital soundtrack to organized struggles against police brutality and economic marginalization on the part of young British men of color, especially the children of black Britons born in the Caribbean.[90] Yet, *There Ain't No Black* also discusses examples of support and cooptation of black music by arms of the postwar British welfare state, grounding a rich discussion of the vexed and proximate relationships between black British music and the postwar British state. Few studies of black British music since Gilroy's foundational texts *There Ain't No Black* and *The Black Atlantic* seem as willing to work with or work toward such anti-essentialist notions of blackness and Britishness.[91] As the editors of a recent collection entitled *Black*

---

[88] *Ibid*., 83.
[89] *Ibid*., 99. As Tavia Nyong'o writes: "Black music is never simply an empirical matter of the music black people happen to make, if for no other reason than because the blackness of black people is never simply empirical." Tavia Nyong'o, "Afro-philo-sonic Fictions: Black Sound Studies after the Millenium," *Small Axe* 18, no. 2 (July 2014): 173–179; 173. A historical-material analysis of the rise and dissemination of notions of essential "black musicality" is given in Ronald Radano, "Black Music Labor and the Animated Properties of Slave Sound," *boundary 2* 43, no. 1 (2016): 173–208.
[90] Paul Gilroy, "*There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack": The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 153–202.
[91] Some recent studies that draw on and expand Gilroy's concepts of hybridity and "black Atlantic musics" include: Jason Toynbee and Catherine Tackley, *Black British Jazz: Routes, Ownership and Performance* (London: Routledge, 2016); Matt Richardson, "'My Father Didn't Have a Dick': Social Death and Jackie Kay's *Trumpet*,"

Popular Music in Britain since 1945 remark, much of the existing scholarship on this topic conceptualizes British people of color "as migrants" and, perhaps unwittingly, therefore "reinforces the traditional, conservative understanding of Britain as a country of white people and enables a construction of British popular music as made by white people."[92] *Black Popular Music in Britain since 1945* aims to redress the surprising lack of scholarly attention specifically to Gilroy's theorization of black anti-essentialism, despite the increasing canonicity of *The Black Atlantic* in the British and U.S. academy.[93]

While scholarship on British opera and art-music have rarely intersected with scholarship within the (inter)discipline of black British cultural studies, Joseph Roach's work on theater and performance in the "circum-Atlantic" in *Cities of the Dead* (1996) includes a brilliant account of *Dido and Aeneas* that situates Purcell's opera within the expansionist political economy of British imperialism. As Roach argues, music historians have often characterized *Dido and Aeneas* as a virtually unique example of a British operatic masterwork from before the twentieth century in such a way that dissociates the work from its specific contribution to a historical social text:

> Wistfully portrayed by musicologists as sui generis, Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* descends as the masterpiece without progeny in the abortive history of English national opera. Whatever its status as an atypical work in the theatrical and musical history of England, I interpret it… as a representative event in the genealogy of circum-Atlantic performance. This enactment of encounter, rupture, and dynastic establishment premiered in an amateur production "By Young Gentlewomen" at Josias Priest's school in Chelsea in 1689…With the education

GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies 8, nos. 2–3 (2012): 361–379; Elizabeth Stinson, "Means of Detection: A Critical Archiving of Black Feminism and Punk Performance," *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 22, nos. 2–3 (2012): 275–311; Andy Wood, "'Original London Style': London Posse and the Birth of British Hip Hop," *Atlantic Studies: Global Currents* 6, no. 2 (2009): 175–190; and Ashley Dawson, *Mongrel Nation*.

[92] Jon Stratton and Nabeel Zuberi, Introduction to *Black Popular Music in Britain since 1945*, ed. Jon Stratton and Nabeel Zuberi (Burlingon, VT: Ashgate, 2016), 1–10; 3.

[93] On the canonization of Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic*, see Brent Hayes Edwards, "The Uses of Diaspora," *Social Text* 19, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 45–73.

> of girls then something of a luxury expenditure… the production of an opera for their improvement and exhibition… [constituted a] performance of waste… In an economy of slave-produced abundance, expensive young women may come to signify the importance of excess itself, the symbolic crossing point of material production/consumption and reproductive fecundity.[94]

While musicologists have both derided and championed Purcell's opera for its apparent failure to engender a subsequent school of British or English opera composition, Roach interprets *Dido and Aeneas* and its first performance in around 1689 as a particularly revealing document of British imperialism and a significant contribution to a political economy based on Middle Passage slavery.[95] Roach's work provides a rare and important point of entry for this dissertation into related issues of British opera, state power, and colonial modernity. In addition, interdisciplinary scholarship on issues of race has recently begun to burgeon in opera studies, even if only more rarely within studies of British opera specifically.[96] The editors of the 2012 collection *Blackness in Opera* introduce the volume's valuable series of assorted case studies as both a response to a relative lack of attention to race in operas studies and an invitation for further work in this area: as they argue, the twentieth-century, particularly in Britain and the U.S., witnessed the arrival of "new and redefined conventions of opera [by which]… new types of racially diverse and unconventional protagonists were granted prominent roles within the genre, coinciding with similar expansions of forms, styles, and story types within opera as a

---

[94] Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 42.

[95] Judith Peraino discusses musicological studies of *Dido and Aeneas* and advocates for a critical reclamation and celebration of the opera as "queer" work without British-operatic heirs. See Judith A. Peraino, "I Am an Opera: Identifying with Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*," in *En Travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera*, ed. Corinne E. Blackmer and Patricia Juliana Smith (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 99–131.

[96] For example, see: Nina Sun Eidsheim, "Marian Anderson and 'Sonic Blackness' in American Opera," *American Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (Sept., 2011): 641–671; Kristen M. Turner, "Class, Race, and Uplift in the Opera House: Theodore Drury and His Company Cross the Color Line," *Journal of Musicological Research* 34, no. 4 (2015): 320–351; and Mary Ingraham, Joseph So, and Roy Moodley, eds., *Opera in a Multicultural World: Coloniality, Culture, Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

whole."[97] As a whole, *Blackness in Opera* formulates a research itinerary that is much wider than the seemingly limited scope of concepts of "musical orientalism," taking into account the lives and works of black singers, composers and audiences, as well as understanding blackness in opera as shifting, historically contingent, and always already implicated in black diasporic contexts, struggles, and joys. Seeking to build on Roach's revisionist history of *Dido and Aeneas* and on the more recent literature on blackness in opera, the following section of this introduction outlines the historical and theoretical premise of my argument that British opera and the national culture of postwar Britain construct and reflect the postcolonial conditions of the modern British welfare state.

Intimacies of Race and Empire in Postwar Britain

Racialization in postwar Britain can perhaps best be understood through the concept of intimacy expounded by a number of historians and theorists of empire. As Ann Stoler writes, intimacy indexes both "sexual relations" and "familiarity," and for this reason it is located "strategically in imperial politics."[98] Intimacy need not be understood as limited to sexual relations, but rather becomes the condition of possibility for encounter and spatial proximity, as well as instrumental in defining whether such encounter will be "familiar" or not. For example, Lisa Lowe discusses how what she calls "bourgeois intimacy" in nineteenth century Europe resulted from a much wider, imperial spatial arrangement and division of labor: "settler-colonial appropriation of enslaved and indentured labor founded the formative wealth of the European bourgeoisie…and

[97] Naomi André, Karen M. Bryan, and Eric Saylor, Introduction to *Blackness in Opera* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 1–10; 6–7.
[98] Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*, 9.

colonized workers produced the material comforters and commodities that furnished the bourgeois home."[99] Lowe's commentary on the "bourgeois intimacy" of imperialism builds on earlier work by historians and critics of the British Empire such as Anne McClintock and Stuart Hall. McClintock, Hall, and others have been instrumental in highlighting the porousness of imperial boundaries between colony and metropole, as well as the violent reproduction of such division within the "domestic" space of the imperial and post-imperial nation-state. While McClintock has documented the domesticity and familiar character of imperial rule in nineteenth-century metropolitan British life, Hall has illuminated the intimately interracial political economies of British imperialism, which exceed categorization as "genetic mixture" or "sexual reproduction."[100] As Hall writes, "If the blood of the colonial workers has not mingled extensively with the English, then their labour-power has long entered the economic blood-stream of British society. It is in the sugar you stir; it is in the sinews of the famous British 'sweet tooth'; it is in the tea-leaves at the bottom of the next 'British' cuppa."[101] Any neat iteration of Britishness encompasses the amorphous, volatile space of the colony and however unwillingly bespeaks British imperialism as its secret sharer.

Sara Ahmed's work on postcoloniality pushes a concept of imperial "intimacy" beyond the temporal and spatial borders of formal European imperialism in the nineteenth century. Although Ahmed concedes a limited applicability to the commonplace assertion that "nations define themselves against strange cultures by finding means of keeping strangers out," her analysis of British and Australian racial states in postcolonial period emphasizes the importance

[99] Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, 30.
[100] See Anne Mcclintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (London: Routledge, 1995); and Stuart Hall, "Racism and Reaction."
[101] Hall, "Racism and Reaction," 25.

of "strangers" and of proximity or intimacy with strangers for the making, remaking and maintenance of the modern nation: "strangers become a means of defining 'who' we are, not by being represented as 'outside' that we (although some strangers are known in this way), but by being incorporated as elements in the 'making' of the 'we' that can be uttered by the national subject."[102] Stuart Hall illustrates how those often identified as strangers encounter the presumptive national subject under postcoloniality; stranger intimacy takes place, Hall writes, within the post-imperial metropolises of urban postwar Britain, "where, for the first time, the incipient 'colony' life of blacks begins for the first time to flourish and expand at the very heart of the British city."[103]

Stranger intimacies—variously, violent and volatile, tense and tender—characterized the racial arrangements of dependency and disavowal that constitute the modern British nation state.[104] Beginning in 1948, postcolonial black transnational migration to Britain resulted in part from government policy of the welfare state that granted British citizenship to all subjects of the British Empire. Postcolonial migration traced historical routes of displacement and trade within the British Empire, as well as challenging the imperial spatial arrangements by which colonized people of color were displaced to the imperial periphery. Already in the late 1940s, for instance, one British government minister stated that although "everything should be done to maintain the intimacy between various parts of the Commonwealth [and Empire]…the immense variety of people" precluded the formation of "true community" among them within mainland Britain.[105] The minister worried that the intimacies of empire, such as a juxtaposition between the colonized

[102] Sara Ahmed, *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality* (London: Routledge, 2000), 97; 112.
[103] Hall, "Racism and Reaction," 28.
[104] On the "tense and tender ties" of empire, see Stoler, "Intimidations of Empire," 3.
[105] Quoted in Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, 20.

and colonizers through the global division and racialization of labor—would prove too unstable when imported into mainland Britain; the minister's comments acknowledge the volatility of empire's inevitable fault-lines, even as they sought to shield the postwar island nation from imperialism's violence.

Widespread discrimination and extortion—much of it perfectly legal—could constitute postcolonial black migrants to Britain in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s as a super-exploitable labor force on whom the political economy of the new welfare state would come to depend. Often disallowed from taking up the precious postwar social housing, people of color in postwar Britain often had no choice but to live in the over-crowded, dilapidated slums of Britain's inner cities.[106] Exploited in large numbers for labor in several different branches of the postwar welfare state, such as public transportation and healthcare, an increasing influx of black migrants from colonies and former colonies made postwar economic recovery possible.[107] Colonial labor relations, reproduced on mainland Britain as "internal colonies" of black immigrants, provided the conditions of possibility for British public discourse to think the universality of state welfare, however much the welfare of racialized immigrant labor was foreclosed within the new intimacy of the nation.

The spatial arrangements of postcolonial black subjects within Britain troubled notions of national cohesion that underwrote the postwar redefinition of insular British national identity. A postcolonial intimacy between colonized and colonizer within mainland Britain threatened not only to bring the forgotten history of empire to the fore, but also augured a "colonization in

[106] See Kennetta Hammond Perry, *London Is the Place for Me: Black Britons, Citizenship, and the Politics of Race* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015), 83–85.
[107] See Clive Harris, "Post-War Migration and the Industrial Reserve Army," in *Inside Babylon: The Caribbean Diaspora in Britain*, eds. Winston James and Clive Harris (London: Verso, 1993), 9–54.

reverse." An increasingly virulent racist discourse in Britain began to blame black ghettoization and a racialized division of the labor-force for shortcomings of the welfare state, especially crime and urban decay. The allegedly high concentration of postcolonial black populations in what was then the slum district of London's Notting Hill were blamed for notorious bouts of street violence in the summer of 1958 between groups of black and white working-class men. Extensive media coverage of "the riots" helped to bring to national prominence the purported problem of race and migration.[108] Often explained as a result of a purported imbalance of men and women in the black population (a demographic phenomenon that gendered policies of postcolonial immigration had in part produced), a volatile and rebellious type of imperial intimacy was perceived as a failure of heterosexual intimacy and a transgression of private sexual intimacy within the public sphere.[109] The demonized figure of the black immigrant would assume a leading role in public and political discourse in postwar Britain, even as racialized labor provided indispensable support for British economic and social recovery under the stewardship of the postwar welfare state.[110]

Postcolonial theory, and the scholarship on postwar British culture and society that has been most in dialogue with it, has pursued a nuanced set of historiographical questions concerning the continuation and adaptation of imperialist arrangements during the period of decolonization. Such questions help apprehend the postwar British welfare state's investments in people of color and processes of racialization. For example, Homi Bhabha underscores what he

---

[108] John Solomos, *Race and Racism in Contemporary Britain* (London: Macmillan, 1989), 58.
[109] See Nadia Ellis, "Black Migrants, White Queers and the Archive of Inclusion in Postwar London," *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 17, no. 6 (2015): 893–915; and Kate Houlden, "Andrew Salkey, the British Home, and the Intimacies In-Between," *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 15, no. 1 (2013): 95–109.
[110] Smith, *New Right Discourse*, 6.

refers to the inevitable "defeat, or even an impossibility, of the 'West' in its authorization of the 'idea' of colonization."[111] In doing so, he describes imperial boundaries between colony and metropole as always already ambivalent, even as he concedes that the essential ambivalence of colonial discourse remains difficult to apprehend.[112] Bhabha argues that "the Western metropole must confront its postcolonial history, told by its influx of postwar migrants and refugees, as an indigenous or native narrative *internal to its national identity*."[113] Anna Marie Smith's work extends Bhabha's insights by illuminating interdependences between, on the one hand, postcolonial black migrants to Britain and British people of color and, on the other hand, the postwar British welfare state and dominant constructions of British national identity in the second half of the twentieth century. The putative stranger, foreigner or "immigrant" remains essential for the sustaining myth of national identity. Smith stresses the importance of a political economy within the postwar period in order to illustrate how the postwar British welfare state and a dominant discourse of white British nativism depended on the super-exploitation of black workers and the relentless "invention and demonization of the black immigrant."[114] In postwar Britain, she writes:

> It was the invention of the black immigrant that the work of forgetting the dependency of the metropole upon the periphery was carried out…By re-naming the colonized as "immigrants," these supplemental populations were suddenly re-defined as the late additions to an already complete body. The "known" colonized became "unknown" "strangers" in the land of their own making.[115]

---

[111] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* [1994], 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2005), 175.
[112] See Homi Bhabha, "Narrating the Nation," in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1990), 1–7.
[113] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* [1994], 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2005), 9. Emphasis original.
[114] *Ibid*., 24.
[115] *Ibid*., 130.

Smith's and Bhabha's work anticipates David Goldberg's theorization of post-imperial Britain as a racial state, a state that constantly produces, maintains and shifts racial boundaries within its national population.[116] Furthermore, racialization continues to support British national cohesion and state political economies; since 2008, government programs of "austerity" and legislation concerning immigration and nationality have redistributed wealth and political power away from people of color in Britain, especially those born outside the United Kingdom.[117]

The Organization of This Dissertation

Examining opera's role in shaping and mediating the racial state in postwar Britain, "Blackness in British Opera" develops a series of four case studies that together investigate a history of operatic premieres in Britain after World War II. In some ways, it charts a course through what Benjamin Britten in 1945 hoped would be the rich history of "English Opera in the future" following the first performance of *Peter Grimes* that year. Whereas much of the scholarship on British opera in the twentieth century concentrates on the works of Benjamin Britten, this dissertation illustrates the way in which the canonization of Britten in 1945 as an emblematically "British composer" of solid international renown prepared the ground for an institutionalization of opera by the postwar British state that endures to this day. With each chapter, it moves further away from the work of Benjamin Britten, thematizing its focus on both Britten's legacy for postwar British opera and the importance of expanding the focus of academic studies of

[116] David Theo Goldberg, *The Racial State*, 1–10.
[117] Victoria Redclift, "New Racisms, New Racial Subjects? The Neo-Liberal Moment and the Racial Landscape of Contemporary Britain," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 37, no. 4 (2014): 577–588.

twentieth-century British opera and art-music "beyond Britten."[118] Throughout his life, Britten remained far from a neutral party to his own canonization as "the" founding figure of postwar British opera and art music, and the first chapter of this dissertation discusses music and writings by one of Britten's lifelong friends, Michael Tippett (1905–1998), to whom Britten dedicated the score of his opera *Curlew River* in 1964 in an act that symbolized Britten's advocacy of Tippett's work and desire to encourage other British composers to follow his lead and "take the plunge" into the composing opera. The next chapter discusses works by Judith Weir (b. 1954), who has often explained her affinity for writing vocal music and her desire to craft her music around notions of local and national communities as directly modeled on aspects of Britten's life and works.[119] The third chapter locates Britten's influence more obliquely in a recent attempt to (re)narrate the historiography of British opera outward from a preoccupation with the operas of Britten and in such a way that would include works by black British composers. It focuses on the centenary celebrations in 2012 of the death of the black British composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875–1912) and the first performance in February that year of his "lost" opera *Thelma* (composed 1907–1909). The final chapter breaks with the chronological sequence traced by the first three in order to reflect more broadly on the limits British opera as a cultural technology of antiracist critique. It turns (back) to the 1970s, a decade canonized in the academic (inter)discipline of black British cultural studies as a period of acute and unprecedented "racial crisis" in which "race [first] became a core theme in wider [British] political discourse."[120]

---

[118] See Peter Wiegold and Ghislaine Kenyon, eds., *Beyond Britten: The Composer and the Community* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2015).

[119] For example, see Gillian Moore, "'A Vigorous Unbroken Tradition': British Composers and the Community since the Beginning of the Twentieth Century," in *Beyond Britten*, 45–73; 54.

[120] John Solomos, Bob Findlay, Simon Jones, and Paul Gilroy, "The Organic Crisis of British Capitalism and Race: The Experience of the Seventies," in *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain*, ed. the Centre for Contemporary Culture Studies (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1982), 9–46. On the canonization of "the 1970s" in

Within the context identified heuristically by foundational scholarship in black British cultural studies as the racial crisis of "70s Britain," it examines radical-antiracist confrontations with the operatic apparatus, including an opera by the Marxist composer David Blake (b. 1936) about the Haitian Revolution based on C.L.R. James's *The Black Jacobins*. In this way, this dissertation winds a path through the history of postwar British opera that leads from Britten and his immediate operatic progeny toward lesser-known composers, writers, works, and performances.

At the same time, a different set of interdisciplinary historical questions also organize and animate the chapters of this dissertation. Each chapter examines British opera and the British operatic apparatus in relation to a (historically, geographically, and socially) specific discourse of antiracism. In doing so, this dissertation returns to the insights of radical-antiracist critique by British writers of color such as Paul Gilroy, Ambalavaner Sivanandan, and Hazel Carby from the 1970s and 1980s in order to help explain distinctions between dominant (liberal) and oppositional (radical) traditions of antiracism in Britain since 1945.[121] Each chapter thereby aims to challenge the commonplace "perception that antiracism has always and everywhere been the same,"[122] while the dissertation as a whole develops a new historiographical itinerary for understanding processes of racialization in Britain during the period of decolonization. Drawing on work by Jodi Melamed and others that elucidates the shifting terms, repertories, and values of different antiracist projects within the modern racial state, this dissertation delineates a number

---

black British cultural studies and by *The Empire Strikes Back* in particular, see Nasar Meer, "Revisiting the Crossroads: Returning to *The Empire Strikes Back*," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 37, no. 10 (2014): 1793–1801.

[121] For example, see: Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black*; Ambalavaner Sivanandan, "Anti-Racist Not Multicultural Education," *Race & Class* 22, no. 4 (1980): 331–352; and Hazel Carby, "White Woman Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood," in *The Empire Strikes Back*, 212–235.

[122] Jodi Melamed, *Represent and Destroy*, 99. As Jodi Melamed elaborates, "antiracisms must be thought of…as knowledge-power projects, as ways of linking representation and signification to fields of discourse and durable forms of social power." See Jodi Melamed, *Represent and Destroy*, 99. Emphasis added.

of antiracist projects within the history of postwar Britain, including antiracist projects that it identifies as dominant/liberal and those it identifies as oppositional/radical. If, as Kathleen Paul argued in the late 1990s, "'race' and migration have been among the most hotly contested issues in British society since 1945," this contestation is best understood as a series of attempts to define and disseminate liberal and radical antiracisms, rather than a conflict between white (British) supremacy and an eternal, singular "antiracism." Individual chapters explain how opera and the British operatic apparatus shaped and were shaped by antiracist discourses. In this way, this dissertation begins to clarify opera's role in a material history of the cultural production of British antiracisms, thereby seeking to contribute to work in cultural studies, media studies, and black British/diaspora studies that situates cultural texts and technologies as "protagonist[s] in social thinking about race."[123] This dissertation aims to maintain a focus on opera, cultural production, and antiracist projects in postwar/postcolonial Britain by employing a deliberately eclectic methodology based on the kinds of interdisciplinary approaches that are common to the (inter)discipline of cultural studies.

Chapter 1 examines the cultural production of liberal "race relations" discourse during the 1950s and 1960s. In the 1950s and 1960s, a liberal discourse of race relations rose to the British cultural and political dominant, ostensibly as a means to address what was widely considered to be Britain's novel "problem" of race in the immediate postwar period. At its essence was a conception of racial antipathy that presumed to locate racism and the responsibility for racism's undoing within the personal psychology of the (white) individual. In this way, race relations discourse renewed white privilege by constituting the white British

[123] Gavin Schaffer, *The Vision of a Nation: Making Multiculturalism on British Television, 1960–80* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 5.

liberal as the felicitous member of the postwar British nation-state on the grounds of his or her liberal-antiracist disposition. While legislative instruments were considered inadequate for the task of changing individual "attitudes," cultural production soon emerged as a central technology of liberal antiracist reform. British race relations discourse encompassed plays, novels, films, television documentaries, plays, and other cultural forms authored by members of the white cultural elite. Chapter 1 reads Michael Tippett's opera *The Knot Garden* (composed between 1962 and 1969 and first performed in 1970) as a key and constitutive text of the cultural production of liberal race relations discourse in postwar Britain. It argues that *The Knot Garden* participated in the production of race relations discourse by supplying pedagogical models of interracial harmony, including those that would presumptively aid the white liberal opera-goer in apprehending the racist pathology of his or her individual psyche. While liberal race relations discourse extolled person-to-person encounter as a site where racial divisions may be overcome, *The Knot Garden* extended liberal-antiracist thinking into modes of intimacy, such as queer and interracial sex, that haunted liberal notions of proper and acceptable forms of racial harmony in postwar Britain.

Chapter 2 investigates the rise of liberal multiculturalism as a dominant or official antiracism in postwar Britain. While it locates the emergence of multicultural discourse within radical, grassroots antiracisms of the 1970s, it focuses on the 1980s, the period in which liberal multiculturalism became a discourse of the center and of government policies and programs by making itself amenable to Thatcherite, post-Keynesian restructuring. It uses original archival research focused on the Arts Council of Great Britain to show how British cultural policy, and particularly government policies concerning opera, were "multiculturalized" during the 1980s. Although Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and the Conservative Party governments she led

from 1979 to 1990 have often been remembered for Thatcher's revanchist resuscitation of imperialist notions of white Britishness, this chapter illuminates Thatcher's promotion of multiculturalism as an official discourse of liberal-multicultural antiracism that acted in harmony with racial abandonment, including the abandonment of British communities of color impoverishment and to "internal colonies" within deindustrialized British urban centers. The chapter also reads Judith Weir's *A Night at the Chinese Opera*, first performed in 1987, as both an active proponent and a witty provocation of British liberal-multicultural discourse. Weir's opera is set in "late thirteenth-century China," and from this comfortable temporal and spatial distance it cleverly satirizes the earnest bureaucratic confidence with which state multiculturalism in 1980s Britain attempted to press cultural performance into the service of government goals of cultural diversity and social cohesion.

Chapter 3 examines the contemporary period, or the period following the "crises" of multiculturalism in the 1990s.[124] While numerous commentators have pronounced the end of race and racism in twenty-first century Britain, radical antiracist critics have noted how such pronouncements bespeak a hegemonic discourse of contemporary liberal antiracism that makes it difficult to comprehend as racial matters the upward redistribution of wealth and government programs of austerity after the global economic recession of 2008. Critics of British postracialism have often described postracial discourse in terms of a rhetorical "denial," absence or nonappearance of racial specificity, but this chapter draws on work in critical museum studies (museology) and studies of slavery memorialization in Britain and the U.S. in order to suggest that postracialism in twenty-first-century Britain cleaves to a particular rhetoric of black history

[124] See Alana Lentin and Gavan Titley, *The Crises of Multiculturalism: Racism in a Neoliberal Age* (London: Zed Books, 2011).

in such a way that makes race appear as disappearing. Illustrating the ways in which black history comes to inhabit the cultural and institutional center of contemporary (twenty-first-century) Britain, this chapter discusses a series of public events in 2012 that were designed to mark the centenary of the death of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, particularly the first performance of his "lost" opera *Thelma*. While the centenary drew attention to Coleridge-Taylor as a black figure in British history, it nevertheless minimized the racial dimensions of Coleridge-Taylor's biography and musical works. As I argue, a close reading of *Thelma* and the early-twentieth-century black internationalism that inspired and shaped its score offer an important corrective to the postracial historiography of Coleridge-Taylor's life and works that prevailed throughout his centenary events in Britain in 2012.

Chapter 4 explores relationships between opera and black radicalism in postwar/postcolonial Britain by investigating a series of cultural texts and performances that it identifies as participants within or influenced by the black radical tradition. Drawing on Cedric Robinson's foundational 1983 study of what he called "the making of the black radical tradition," this chapter begins by tracing and assessing the use of opera in cultural production identified by Robinson in Black Marxism as principal texts of the black radical tradition, namely writings by the anticolonial-antiracist writers Frantz Fanon and C.L.R. James.[125] Focusing on two different postwar texts by James both named "The Black Jacobins," it discusses how these accounts of the Haitian Revolution mobilize the European operatic tradition. Next, Chapter 4 examines interconnections between black radical culture and state-funded opera performances and compositions in postwar Britain—the relationship, in other words, between the black radical

[125] Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* [1983], 2nd edition (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

tradition and the discursive field that this dissertation heuristically calls "British opera." It investigates the trope of British opera in Naseem Khan's 1976 study *The Arts Britain Ignores: The Arts of Ethnic Minorities in Britain*, before turning to *Toussaint, or The Aristocracy of the Skin* (1977), an opera by the white British composer David Blake based closely on James's writing on the Haitian Revolution. Whereas the first three chapters of this dissertation approach British opera via its imbrication with dominant or official antiracisms, Chapter 4 asks after the limits and possibilities of British opera and British operatic apparatus as a means for "making" or extending the black radical tradition—that is, oppositional or radical antiracisms that challenge, thwart or undermine the hegemony of liberal or official antiracisms in postwar Britain.

CHAPTER ONE

INTIMATE OPERA: MICHAEL TIPPETT'S *THE KNOT GARDEN*, AND THE CULTURAL PRODUCTION OF LIBERAL RACE RELATIONS DISCOURSE

A liberal discourse of antiracism—"race relations" discourse—rose to cultural and political dominance in Britain during the mid 1960s and developed in response to what many perceived to be the worsening climate of racial antipathy in British urban areas. As incidents of public disorder and violence were interpreted as worrying evidence of postwar Britain's burgeoning "race problem," politicians collaborated with anthropologists, psychologists and other members of the liberal intelligentsia to forge a new science of race relations for postcolonial Britain. For the architects of liberal race relations discourse, of greatest concern was the possibility that Britain would fall into more widespread and damaging racial unrest, and hence succumb to international opprobrium. By dismissing the imperial history of black subjugation, British race relations discourse could also effectively equate racism with prejudice, reducing structural and historically contingent racism to a problem of individual psychology, even while a state race relations industry institutionalized programs of surveillance that yielded vast quantities of data concerning British public "opinion" on racial difference.[1] As one British liberal reformer wrote in 1955, "the ultimate disappearance of [racial] discrimination will probably depend upon the success of educative and other measures designed to eliminate prejudice… [B]y doing everything in our power to improve racial relationships… we can set an example to South Africa

[1] See Antony Robin Jeremy Kushner, *We Europeans? Mass-Observation, 'Race' and British Identity in the Twentieth Century* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004).

and to the world."[2] At a time of Britain's decline as an imperial power, race relations provided a liberal framework for racial meanings that sought to manage the exposure of domestic racial inequality and disorder as a major threat to postwar British national cohesion.

At the core of race relations discourse was a geopolitical narrative of imperial amnesia: once black immigration had been adequately curbed, black people already residing within the U.K. would integrate into British society, defined through a liberal framework of civic order and legal rights, and thereby secure Britain's moral legitimacy on the international stage. By reinventing British ("national") identity as island-bound or insular, race relations discourse played a crucial role in Britain's postwar national recovery. As postcolonial black migration to Britain began to increase exponentially in the 1950s, the arrival of people of color in British ports, train stations, and city streets not only served as a constant reminder that Britain's grip on colonial power in the global South was rapidly collapsing, but also brought to the fore Empire's violent and forgotten history.[3] Race relations discourse supported the repression of this historical knowledge of Empire by renaming the colonized as "immigrants" and redefining blackness as a late addition to an otherwise complete British national community, as if British wealth did not depend upon both the colonized labor of people of color and the super-exploitation of postcolonial black migrants in the postwar era.[4] While race relations discourse in general represented racial antipathy in Britain as a function of "excessive" postcolonial black migration, specific pieces of race relations legislation actually introduced blatantly racist immigration

---

[2] Anthony H. Richmond, *The Colour Problem: A Study of Colour Prejudice, Racial Discrimination, and Social Separation, with an Account of Racial Relations and the "Colour-Bar" in Britain and Commonwealth Territories in Africa and the West Indies* (London: Penguin, 1955).
[3] Paul Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 101.
[4] Stuart Hall, "Racism and Reaction," in *Five Views of Multi-Racial Britain: Talks on Race Relations Broadcast by BBC TV*, ed. David Lane (London: Commission for Racial Equality, 1978), 23–35; 27. Also see Kathleen Paul, *Whitewashing Britain: Race and Citizenship in the Postwar Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 120.

legislation. Despite British industry's reliance on a black migrant workforce, successive governments predicated postwar "national" cohesion upon both limiting and integrating the black presence in British life. Analyzed as an institutionalized regime of racial knowledge and an official solution to the postcolonial crisis of British national identity, race relations discourse in 1960s Britain can be understood as thoroughly consistent with racist immigration controls and a disciplinary regime that criminalized those who exceeded the boundaries of normative racial epistemologies.[5]

As liberal antiracism was sutured to postwar British nationalism, new schemas of racial stigma and privilege were formed. The task of securing public order among white and black Britons increasingly assumed the status of an urgent national priority, for which the British white liberal was to become a new moral agent, educating other, supposedly less tolerant white Britons on race matters. In other words, the British discourse of race relations set the stage for the kind of privileged racial formation that Jodi Melamed calls a "heroic form of liberal whiteness."[6] While the incorporation of liberal antiracism into British legal instruments was decisive in pushing issues of race to the top of the national political agenda and shaping racial knowledge in accordance with state prerogatives of "national" cohesion, cultural production emerged as a central technology of British race relations discourse within a liberal framework that defined racism as principally a problem of prejudice or opinion.[7] To the extent that changing individual

[5] Anna Marie Smith documents how the Race Relations Act 1965 provided the legislative means for the criminalization of several black British antiracist activists; see Smith, *New Right Discourse on Race and Sexuality*, 96–103. Also see Anne-Marie Angelo, "The Black Panthers in London, 1967–1972: A Diasporic Struggle Navigates the Black Atlantic," *Radical History Review* 103 (Winter 2009): 17–35; and Paul Gilroy, *"There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack": The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* [1987] (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 79–88.
[6] Melamed, *Represent and Destroy*, 59.
[7] See Susan Hayward, "Blacks in Britain: Racial Discourse in UK Politics and Media," *Jump Cut* 41 (May 1997): 49–58.

"attitude" emerged as both the goal of liberal antiracism and outside the proper purview of official legislation, British race relations discourse soon encompassed plays, novels, films, television and other forms of cultural production.

Authored by members of the white cultural elite, the culture of British race relations advertised its liberal credentials.[8] Defined as cultural texts about race that anatomized interracial encounters in such a way as to educate white audiences about the damaging effects of racism, the cultural production of race relations was perceived as encouraging changes in white attitudes that were presumed to have a mitigating effect on racial antipathy. With the circulation of such texts, white British artists and writers supplied pedagogical models of interracial harmony, which further reinforced their status in postcolonial Britain as moral heroes who had rid themselves of racial prejudice. The wider cultural production of race relations discourse in Britain distanced itself from structural and economic aspects of racial disparity, even while denigrating other white Britons as suffering under racist pathologies. In their role as moral heroes of Britain's postcolonial condition, members of the white cultural elite wielded a relatively unhindered access to cultural production that contrasted with the much more limited repertoires of antiracist values that the culture of race relations conveyed.

This chapter locates opera within the cultural production of British race relations discourse. I will analyze the first new opera performed in postwar Britain to represent either black modernity or interracial encounter, *The Knot Garden* (1970).[9] The third opera by the British composer Michael Tippett (1905–1998), the work is based on a range of source materials,

[8] Wendy Webster, *Englishness and Empire: 1939–1965* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 150–51.
[9] Frederick Delius's opera *Koanga*, first performed in 1899, perhaps represents an earlier example. See Eric Saylor, "Race, 'Realism,' and Fate in Frederick Delius's *Koanga*," in *Blackness in Opera*, eds. Naomi André, Karen M. Bryan, and Eric Saylor (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 78–100.

and uses an original scenario and a libretto by Tippett. *The Knot Garden* articulates themes of racial equality, civil rights and the personal psychology of race relations, betraying Tippett's commitment throughout the 1960s to a transatlantic politics of race within a liberal vision of social justice. One notable feature of Tippett's opera is the way in which its first production at the Royal Opera House in December 1970 thrust black diasporic masculinity into the fraught racial environment of postcolonial Britain. By choosing to pronounce on race and racism, Tippett conveys the cultural power conferred upon certain white Britons to see themselves as the privileged authors of antiracist social transformations. This chapter discusses the opera's contribution to the cultural production of dominant values concerning what counted as racial knowledge in the British "liberal hour" of the late 1960s. Whereas some recent critics have claimed *The Knot Garden* as "the first gay opera," my analysis aims to shift the discussion of the work from providing support for a progress narrative of gay and lesbian cultural representation, in which "gay opera" becomes a dubious symbol of British or Western democratic freedom and superior liberal tolerance, to a concern with the historical conditions of racial stigma and privilege required by a postwar British discourse of civil rights and national identity.[10]

Since its first performance, *The Knot Garden* has often been met with critical unease and bewilderment, ironically maintaining a silence on race that the opera seeks to interrupt. But Tippett's critics have seemed even less willing to unearth another impulse that runs throughout the work: Tippett's profound emotional connection with its drama.[11] In fact, *The Knot Garden*

---

[10] For example, see Philip Brett and Elizabeth Wood, "Gay and Lesbian Music," *Grove Music Online* (accessed August 5, 2012), <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/42824>.

[11] See Kenneth Gloag, "Tippett's Operatic World: From *The Midsummer Marriage* to *New Year*," in *The Cambridge Companion to Michael Tippett*, eds. Kenneth Gloag and Nicholas Jones (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 229–63; Suzanne Robinson, "The Pattern from the Palimpsest: Convergences of Eliot, Tippett, and Shakespeare," in *T.S. Eliot's Orchestra: Critical Essays on Poetry and Music*, ed. John Xiros Cooper (New York: Garland, 2000), 149–17; Jonathan Cross, *The Stravinsky Legacy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press,

remains one of the only operas ever written to contain an autobiographical sketch of its composer.[12] Through the opera's character of Dov, "a musician," Tippett seeks to explore—as we will see—his own intersectional identity as white, homosexual, and a member of the cosmopolitan liberal elite; Dov, Tippett later confirmed, "is close to myself."[13] Whereas commentators have tended to assume that Tippett's personal investments in the opera countermand any claims it may make upon social and political fields, this chapter situates *The Knot Garden* as an intervention into the liberal discourse of race relations that presumed to locate racism—and the responsibility for racism's undoing—within the personal psychology of the (white) individual.[14] As I will argue, *The Knot Garden* not only served as a vehicle for self-representation, but also attests to the historical production and national institutionalization of a liberal discourse on race relations that extolled encounter and intimacy as sites where racial divisions may be traversed and overcome.[15] By way of conclusion, I consider how recent attempts to canonize *The Knot Garden* as "the first gay opera" naturalize its liberal organization of racial difference. Insofar as *The Knot Garden* collides black, queer and diasporic affiliations,

---

1998), 63; and Ian Kemp, *Tippett: The Composer and His Music* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). One recent study makes the contrasting claim that characters in *The Knot Garden* function as a foil to Tippett's self-image; see Iain Stannard, "Hermaphrodism and the Masculine Body: Tippett's Aesthetic Views in a Gendered Context," in *Masculinity and Western Musical Practice*, eds. Ian D. Biddle and Kirsten Gibson (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2009), 279–304.

[12] Claire Taylor-Jay identifies the genre of the "artist-opera" or *Künsteroper* in Weimar Germany, which feature a "composer" or "artist" as a central character in the drama. See Claire Taylor-Jay, *The Artist-Operas of Pfitzner, Krenek, and Hindemith: Politics and the Ideology of the Artist* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004).

[13] Michael Tippett, *Music of the Angels: Essays and Sketchbooks of Michael Tippett* (London: Eulenburg Books, 1980), 236.

[14] Joanna Bullivant crafts a recent iteration of this thesis about Tippett's work that is widespread in the literature; see Joanna Bullivant, "Tippett and Politics: The 1930s and Beyond," in *The Cambridge Companion to Michael Tippett*, 68–85; 79.

[15] See Tavia Nyong'o, *The Amalgamation Waltz: Race, Performance, and the Ruses of Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 170.

however, Tippett's opera also presages the kind of queer of color critiques that rarely surface in musicology and opera studies.[16]

Tippett's Nature

> [I]n my youth, my homosexual side revealed itself. I accepted it without reservation, as something instinctive and therefore natural… As far as possible, I tried to be open about it.
>
> —Michael Tippett, *Those Twentieth-Century Blues* (1991)

Although Tippett's sexuality had been something of an open secret among the British intelligentsia since the 1930s, it was not until he published an autobiography in 1991 at the age of 86 that Tippett stated explicitly in prose what many had already known about him.[17] In the autobiography *Those Twentieth-Century Blues*, therefore, Tippett couches statements about his homosexual identity and desire less in the form of public confession than as a plain matter of fact. In an age in which issues of HIV/AIDS once again thrust male homosexuality into the spotlight of British politics, Tippett's 1991 autobiography crafts a narrative that pits a "natural" male homoeroticism against a repressive state: "The fact that such physical relations were illegal then even in private led me, like others, to play various tricks."[18] Challenging the claim made frequently throughout the twentieth century that homosexuality is "unnatural," Tippett reclaims

[16] Rachel Lewis, "What's Queer about Musicology Now?" *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture* 13 (2009): 43–53. Also see Jafari S. Allen, "Black/Queer/Diaspora at the Current Conjuncture," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 18, nos. 2–3 (2012): 211–48.
[17] Suzanne Robinson, "'Coming Out to Oneself': Encodings of Homosexuality Identity from the First String Quartet to *The Heart's Assurance*," in *The Cambridge Companion to Michael Tippett*, 86–102; 86. As David Clarke has documented, throughout the 1960s and 1970s Tippett was apt to cast references to his sexuality in descriptions of a "rupture" between his subjectivity or sense of self and what Tippett wrote in 1958 was the "particular set of dominant values" that govern the society "[w]e are born into." See David Clarke, *The Music and Thought of Michael Tippett: Modern Times and Metaphysic* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 229–31.
[18] Michael Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues: An Autobiography* (London: Hutchinson, 1991), 52.

concepts of nature and the natural as inclusive of male homosexuality and implicitly also of a wider range of sexual desires and practices.[19]

A belief in the fundamental "complexity" of human sexuality animated much of Tippett's artistic life throughout his long career, from the late 1930s until his death in 1998.[20] Born in London in 1905, Tippett spent most of the ten years after he graduated from the Royal College of Music in 1928 heavily involved with various left-wing musical organizations among a heady climate of Marxist agitprop and amateur music-making.[21] In 1938, he joined the Socialist Anti-War Front, which formalized his political opposition to what became the Second World War.[22] In the late 1930s, he expanded his theoretical and philosophical purview, exploring the Jungian practice of "dream analysis" as a method for accessing the unconscious or a "pre-social" human nature.[23]

Initially, it was Tippett's pacifism rather than his explorations of psychoanalysis and sexuality that founded his compositional decisions regarding large-scale works. Written between 1939 and 1941, the oratorio *A Child of Our Time* articulates a response to the beginning of World War Two. The work concerns in part the Nazi pogrom of *Kristallnacht* and places this historical event in the wider, European perspective of the British government's refusal to accept European Jewish refugees in the late 1930s. Unusually, *A Child of Our Time* is punctuated by Tippett's

---

[19] See Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson, Introduction, *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire*, eds. Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010), 1–50.
[20] Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues*, 52. Also see Meirion Bowen, *Michael Tippett*, 2nd edition (London: Robson Books, 1997).
[21] Bullivant, "Tippett and Politics: The 1930s and Beyond."
[22] Kemp, *Tippett*, 33; 41–42.
[23] Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues*, 62–63. David Ayerst claims that a copy of Jung's *Psychological Types* was "one of the most thumbed books on [Tippett's] shelves…which [he] first read in 1932 or 1933." See *Michael Tippett: A Symposium on his Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. Ian Kemp (London: Faber & Faber, 1965), 66. See, for instance, Michael Tippett, *Moving into Aquarius*, 2nd edition (London: Paladin, 1974).

choral settings of five "Negro spiritual songs," which seem to relate these historical aspects of state racism in Europe to practices of racial segregation and disenfranchisement in the Jim Crow-era U.S. South.[24] *A Child of Our Time* was not heard until Benjamin Britten could arrange for a public performance in 1944, yet after 1945 the work started to be performed widely, becoming something of a pacifist memorial of the conflict.[25]

After the Second World War, Tippett began returning to the psychoanalytic theories of Jung and Freud. References to psychoanalysis and individual psychology abound in his published writings from this period. In *Moving into Aquarius* (1959), he discusses the task of recovering an "uncorrupted" form of sexuality from the field of sexual possibility represented by the psyche. Sex and desire, he writes, have been "neutralised, tabulated, rationalised—de-sexed" by the unnatural forces of science and industry. Tippett suggests that industrial capitalism has become responsible for corrupting human perceptions of their sexual desires or "inner drives," severely limiting the "incalculable power" of sex and sexuality.[26] For Tippett, sexual liberation implied a strategy for radical social transformation toward conditions of equality.

Tippett's ideas about sexuality in the late 1950s and 1960s reflected the wildly popular theories of the Frankfurt School philosopher and U.S. émigré Herbert Marcuse. In this period, adherents of the postwar New Left and counterculture on both sides of the Atlantic elevated

---

[24] Tippett first heard Negro spiritual songs on a BBC radiobroadcast of an African-American choir and subsequently in the Hal Johnson Choir's performances on the soundtrack to the Hollywood film *The Green Pastures* (1936), on general release in Britain throughout 1937. See Kenneth Gloag, *Tippett: A Child of Our Time* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999); and Tippett*, Those Twentieth-Century Blues*, 50. Suzanne Robinson uncovers the reception of the African American singer Paul Robeson by the British trade union movements, as well as in the British and U.S. Jewish press, in the 1930s. See Suzanne Robinson, "From Agitprop to Parable: A Prolegomenon to *A Child of Our Time*," in *Michael Tippett: Music and Literature*, ed. Suzanne Robinson (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate: 2002), 78–121. Also see Michael Tippett, "The Nameless Hero: Reflections on *A Child of Our Time*," 188. BBC Radio, 22 April 1950. Reprinted in *Music of the Angels*.
[25] See Gloag, *Tippett,* and Kemp, *Tippett*, 149–79.
[26] Tippett, *Moving into Aquarius*, 127.

Marcuse's theories connecting sexual liberation with liberation from seemingly any source of oppression almost to the level of prophetic doctrine, giving expression to the widespread concern with the power of social norms or "conformity."[27] Appealing to Cold War prerogatives of choice and individualism, these theories of sexuality placed the burden for achieving sexual liberation with the individual, and his or her capacity to respond to a presumably repressed sexual "nature." Avowedly utopian, sexual liberation discourse provided Tippett, like many other white liberals in Western Europe and North America, with a theory of sexuality that framed the task of social transformation in expansive notions of sexual intimacy and desire.[28] Steeped in Marcusian theories of sexual repression, Tippett had confidence in the ability of art to liberate sex, and hence the individual, from modern "industrialized societies."[29]

Crucially, Marcusian thinking had provided Tippett with a set of conceptual parallels between art and desire.[30] In "creative art," he claimed, there lie "irrational, unaccountable elements," for "the sensibilities and faculties we employ when we give rein to our desires for art are… our more primitive and untrained ones—occasionally some of our debased ones." Thus the "artist's job," Tippett wrote later, is "[t]o create a dream," "to create images from the depths of the imagination and to give them form whether visual, intellectual or musical."[31] As Foucault

---

[27] See Madeleine Davis, "The Origins of the British New Left," in *1968 in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1956–1977*, eds. Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 45–56; Dennis Dworkin, *Cultural Marxism in Postwar Britain: History, the New Left, and the Origins of Cultural Studies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997).

[28] Kevin Floyd, *The Reification of Desire: Toward a Queer Marxism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 122. Drawing on psychoanalytic notions of the unconscious as representing a "primitive" subjectivity, sexual liberation discourse challenged claims linking queer or non-normative sexual practices and desires with socially abjected categories of "the unnatural," while dissimulating the historical relations by which concepts of "the natural" had been formalized and perpetuated by the political projects of European colonialism. See Ranjana Khanna, *Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003); and Jonathan Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 338.

[29] Tippett, *Moving into Aquarius*, 128.

[30] Clarke, *The Music and Thought of Michael Tippett*, 14–15.

[31] Tippett, *Moving into Aquarius*, 126; 128; 153; 156.

suggests in *The History of Sexuality*, the seeming utopia of sexual liberation may be represented only in the form of a performative act, which announces a state of liberation without rendering its details or giving it flesh. For Foucault, a politics of sexual utopia emerged in the postwar West in the form of a "longing for the garden of earthly delights," an indefinite deferral of sexuality's presumably liberatory potential that required both a speaker (or an artist) and a performance (or work of cultural representation) in order to give such "longing" voice and shape.[32]

Foucault helps explain how historically contingent conditions of cultural production set the terms for Marcusian sexual politics. Although "sexual liberation" was understood as an internally oriented endeavor to know the self by means of self-discovery, artistic representation both forestalled the material construction of "the garden of earthly delights" and determined the limits of access to a "longing" for such a "garden." Any "freedom" for irrationality and desire that art provides therefore depends upon accessing the means of cultural production. However, in the case of opera, at least in postwar Britain, institutional priorities and limitations meant that such access was severely limited. Where Tippett staged a politics of the self in the opera house, he did so only after professional operatic performance in postwar Britain had been thoroughly saturated with connotations of national cohesion and an abundance of state welfare provision that stretched to include opera. By basing a revolutionary politics of individual desire on "creative art," Tippett cast a challenge to social convention only after access to cultural institutions had selectively been granted to him.

[32] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, *An Introduction* (New York: Vintage, 1978), 9.

This process of selection is perhaps evident in the specific historical contexts that allowed Tippett's operas to reach the stage. As his 1991 autobiography attests in detail, a series of coincidences and personal connections in the late 1940s and early 1950s contributed to the launch of Tippett's career as an opera composer.[33] Following *A Child of Our Time*, Tippett's reputation was secured on the basis of two operas written after 1945: *The Midsummer Marriage* (1955) and *King Priam* (1962). Although the first performance of *The Midsummer Marriage* at Covent Garden in 1955 was met with a "mixture of derision, bewilderment and admiration," criticism soon began to shift in Tippett's favor, especially as a result of the production of *King Priam* alongside Britten's *War Requiem* in a festival commemorating the new Coventry Cathedral in 1962, as well as a BBC studio broadcast of *The Midsummer Marriage* the following year. Subsequent large-scale works by Tippett were premiered in the 1960s, including the Concerto for Orchestra (1963) and the cantata *The Vision of Saint Augustine* (1966), which were met with wide acclaim. Tippett's first two operas confirmed his status as a "national" icon in postwar Britain.

The 1970s and 1980s witnessed performances of numerous new works by Tippett, yet the centrality of race to many of these has rarely been remarked upon. It was not until he finished the score of *King Priam* that Tippett's compositional interests returned to themes of racialized violence and the cultural products of the black diaspora that had been important influences on *A Child of Our Time*. In the postwar period, Tippett's first work to foreground issues of racial difference and blackness is *The Knot Garden*. Tippett had by this time secured his reputation as such that with his next opera he could address a set of personal concerns, including a concern

[33] See Tippett, *Those Twentieth-Century Blues*, 215–20.

with the personal itself. Following this, aspects of the contemporary politics of race and nation feature in several later works, including the civil rights speeches of Martin Luther King (quoted by the solo soprano in the Third Symphony of 1972), black nationalism (in the opera *The Ice Break* of 1977) and Rastafarianism (in Tippett's final opera *New Year* of 1989). A number of these works appropriate black musical styles, such as boogie-woogie, blues, and rhythm and blues in *The Knot Garden*, the classic blues of prewar Bessie Smith records in the Third Symphony and 1980s rap music in *New Year*.[34]

Although these aspects of his music reflect the unprecedented if contested prominence of black musicians and black music in British popular culture during the second half of the twentieth century, Tippett was unusual among postwar British art-music composers in tackling contemporary political issues of race and antiracism in many of his works. Beginning in the late 1950s, Tippett's large body of published writings and of public talks develops concerns with racial difference and the politics of antiracism. Couched as part of Tippett's wider exploration of the purportedly redemptive power of human nature over "corrupt" social constructions of human inequality, Tippett's output of music and writings across the second half of the twentieth century discloses a commitment to addressing liberal concerns with racial difference and inequality and founded Tippett's aspiration to compose music that, as he stated in *Moving into Aquarius*, is "valuable… to society." Whereas the presence of race in Tippett's music has often been overlooked, this forms part of a wider trend in the scholarly literature by which Tippett's postwar music is deemed "apolitical," particularly in relation to Tippett's apparent disavowal of his

[34] On Tippett's Third Symphony, see Thomas Schuttenhelm, *The Orchestral Music of Michael Tippett* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 231–56. On *The Ice Break*, see Eric Walter White, *Tippett and his Operas* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1979), 113–24; on *New Year*, see Geraint Lewis, "'New Year' in the New World," *The Musical Times* 130, no. 1761 (November 1989): 665–69.

prewar Marxist politics after 1945.[35] In turn, this encourages descriptions of certain works as "topical," insofar as critics draw attention to their invocation of contemporary themes concerning racial conflict and antiracism. In such instances, Tippett's role in actively shaping representations of racial difference is obscured. A theory of "topicality" thus reinforces the view that Tippett's representations reflect the normative truths of social reality, permitting an identification with Tippett's liberalism that conceals the cultural and political work his compositions accomplish.[36]

By decontextualizing Tippett's music from an analysis of race, the scholarly literature has in effect shielded from criticism a liberal discourse of race relations that owed much of its legitimacy in 1960s Britain to cultural production. Instead, the kind of liberal antiracism that rose to prominence in the U.S. and Western Europe during the postwar decades can be understood as historically contingent upon changing ideas about human nature that had everything to do with sexual liberation and the "free love" of the counterculture. As Tavia Nyong'o explains, by extending the limits of "what counts as natural," sexual liberation discourse provided the terms to tolerate "sex across the color line or certain forms of same sexuality," even while retaining the stigmatized category of "unnatural."[37] Jodi Melamed describes further how such liberal thinking on sexual intimacy can amount to a conservative politics, including of race. Focusing on "liberal antiracisms that emerged after World War II," she observers that, "[a]lthough liberal discourses

---

[35] Clarke refers to Tippett's "turning away from active, left-wing political engagement" and his "wholesale adoption of an aesthetic of autonomous art." See Clarke, *The Music and Thought of Michael Tippett*, 31. Also see Bullivant, "Tippett and Politics," 81. Ian Kemp maintains that Tippett moved away from writing political music altogether after the start of the Second World War, and instead imbued his music with "fundamental human and moral values." See Kemp, *Tippett*, 49. Joanna Bullivant writes of "the topicality of some of Tippett's works (for example, the pertinence of *The Break* to the racial tensions of 1960s America)." See Bullivant, "Tippett and Politics," 69–80.

[36] For example, according to Ian Kemp, "[t]he characters [of *The Knot Garden*] embody contemporary social problems, including homosexuality [and] race relations," while *The Ice Break*, he writes, "is set unambiguously in the USA of the 1960s, [bringing] racial tension and hippy culture to the forefront of the action," where they are "treated… realistically." Kemp, *Tippett*, 404; 462.

[37] Tavia Nyong'o, "Back to the Garden: Queer Ecology in Samuel Delany's Heavenly Breakfast," *American Literary History* 24, no. 4 (Winter 2012): 747–67.

circulate under the motto of creating change for the good of society, their operations secure social stasis."[38] Critical scholarship on liberal antiracism helps examine race in Tippett's oeuvre without ignoring the ways in which race relations discourse formed in 1950s and 1960s Britain as a response to the postcolonial crisis in national identity and worked to erase the history of British imperialism from questions of racialized inequality in the present.

"Intimate Opera"

> *The Knot Garden* is an intimate opera.
>
> — Michael Tippett, *Those Twentieth-Century Blues*

Having first decided to model *The Knot Garden* as a kind of psychological analysis of "different contemporary characters," Tippett turned his attention to finding an appropriate setting for a scenario in which "lovers, or love, speaks."[39] After considering a "Persian or Indian or Italian" garden, Tippett settled on a "highly metaphoricised" garden as the setting for the opera.[40] For love to speak, it seemed, it required professional psychoanalysis and the depth of personal experience that autobiography could provide; one of Tippett's early compositional decisions in 1964 was to place a "psychiatrist" at the center of the opera's action and include an avatar of himself—the autobiographical character Dov—as the work's most prominent analysand.[41] *The Knot Garden* is thus both an essay in autobiography and an occasion for self-invention. For Tippett, *The Knot Garden* provided a means by which he could subject to scrutiny

[38] Melamed, *Represent and Destroy*, xiii; xiv.
[39] White, *Tippett and his Operas*, 94.
[40] Thomas Schuttenhelm, *The Selected Letters of Michael Tippett* (London: Faber & Faber: 2005).
[41] Eric Walter White quotes an unpublished and undated letter from Tippett, probably from 1965, in which Tippett refers to a "psychiatrist." Tippett's score, however, describes this character as an "analyst." See White, *Tippett and his Operas*, 95.

the liberal thinking on race that the opera nevertheless qualifies; the work is concerned in part, he wrote, with raising "the possibility that our 'white' society is in an unconscious masochistic relation towards the 'black.'" Tippett's particular contribution to race relations discourse, which I analyze in terms of what I call "queer intimacy," expands and complicates an ongoing project in queer of color criticism that Sharon Patricia Holland refers to as a politics of documenting "the compelling connection between the erotic and racism."[42]

Throughout the nearly seven years that Tippett spent working on the opera from early 1962 until 1969, the enclosed space suggested by the "metaphoricised" garden setting functioned for Tippett as a staging-ground on which to experiment with various themes, sources and dramatic possibilities. Importantly, Meirion Bowen also points to the parallel between the eclecticism of Tippett's sources and the heterotopia of the opera's garden setting. Bowen (b. 1940), Tippett's romantic partner and professional amanuensis from the early 1960s until Tippett's death in 1998, has described *The Knot Garden* as without a "conventional narrative thread," but instead as "fragments from a discourse on love… revealing the plot that might have been."[43] Tippett interpreted the opera in similar terms when he wrote to Bowen on February 21, 1969: "I finished [*The Knot Garden*] yesterday—with Thea and Faber [two of the opera's characters] moving to go off together to make love. I thought of you—and felt we'd have done the same had the opportunity served—and all night if we felt like it! Though we're a stranger couple than is often found."[44] Tippett's remark—and the image of queer intimacy it both covets and suspends—suggests that queerness offers a means for interpreting the nature of Tippett's

[42] Sharon Patricia Holland, *The Erotic Life of Racism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 44.
[43] Meirion Bowen, "A Tempest of Our Time," in *The Operas of Michael Tippett*, ed. Nicholas John (New York: Riverrun Press, 1985) 93–98; 94.
[44] Schuttenhelm, *Selected Letters*, 422.

opera, in particular the itinerary it proposes for the natural bases of human sexuality and racial categorizations.

Tippett's garden is definitely queer.[45] While the garden evoked for Tippett a courtly or bourgeois world of order and decorum, it also provided an opportunity to uproot conventional arrangements and revel in the remaking of nature that gardens and gardening seem to encourage. In his earliest extant sketches for the opera, Tippett conjures the literary and cultural heritage of the "renaissance rose garden… [with] lovers, a fountain, and music," but also imagines transplanted there a "negro with a guitar"—in this context a historically, racially, sonically and sexually transgressive figure who jars with the aristocratic setting on account of the unexpected harmonies that his guitar implies.[46] The garden also permitted Tippett to consider a number of different aliases for his on-stage representative, whom Tippett first named Piers before deciding on the name Dov. The opera makes a feature of Dov's willingness to refashion identity, particularly gender and sexual identity.[47] If queerness, as Nyong'o writes, "acknowledges the necessity of a stranger intimacy," the queer intimacies of *The Knot Garden* emerge not only in relation to the strange encounters between the inhabitants of its setting, but also via a making-strange of the self.[48] As such, *The Knot Garden* encouraged Tippett to explore in writing and in the score of the work what he called "the sado-masochistic bases of some human relationships," including homosexual ones like his own.[49]

---

[45] This formulation is indebted to Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands' work on Derek Jarman. See Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands, "Melancholy Natures, Queer Ecologies," in *Queer Ecologies*, 331–58.
[46] Schuttenhelm, *Selected Letters*, 381.
[47] See Gloag, "Tippett's Operatic World," 259.
[48] Nyong'o, "Back to the Garden," 764.
[49] Quoted in White, *Tippett and his Operas*, 97. Across most of the time he worked on the piece, Tippett deliberately kept "the title… fluid till we see the whole text," since there remained sexual "possibilities," he suggested, lying "hidden" between unexplored juxtapositions of his source materials. Schuttenhelm, *Selected Letters*, 381.

Tippett's deliberate attempt to shock his audience also distinguishes *The Knot Garden* from the kind of narrative and theatrical cogency evinced by the large majority of previous postwar British operas. Here, Tippett's use of "shock tactics" hinges on an understanding of racism as prejudice and individual psychology: the "unconscious relation," as Tippett wrote, between white and black people.[50] Thrusting contemporary issues of race and migration onto the opera house stage, *The Knot Garden* seems to require a self-reflexive commentary on its status as a profoundly political opera, highlighting the possibility that its "race work" could be missed by an audience attuned to a postwar British repertory of operatic works and productions much less preoccupied with an immediate task of social transformation. Yet, despite the fact that *The Knot Garden* includes scenes of voyeurism, sexual assault, incest, adultery, and sexual role-play and BDSM (bondage, domination and sadomasochism), some forms of human sexuality were nevertheless concealed from the final score of the opera. At one point in the compositional process, Tippett had included what he called a "shock sentence" in a scene in which his on-stage representative, Dov, screams "I want to be raped!" as his male lover is "dragged off."[51] Rich with erotic possibility for stranger intimacy, Tippett's garden celebrates a queer revisioning of nature that obeyed its own laws of discretion.

Deploying queer assemblage against conservative notions of nature and heritage, Tippett drew on a seemingly disparate array of literary, dramatic and musical sources in writing *The Knot Garden*, rather than adapting any one source material. Most significantly, as Suzanne Robinson suggest, the entire opera is "composed over a residual palimpsest of *The Tempest*."[52] In

[50] Quoted in White, *Tippett and his Operas*, 97.
[51] *Ibid.*, 97.
[52] See Robinson, "The Pattern from the Palimpsest," 157.

1962, Tippett composed music for a production of the play in London, and it continued to capture Tippett's imagination as he devised the scenario, libretto and score of *The Knot Garden*.[53] Among recent works for the stage, particularly important for Tippett's work on *The Knot Garden* was T.S. Eliot's verse drama *The Cocktail Party* (1949), which discusses psychoanalysis and individual psychology, and Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey* (1958), a highly successful play that examines interracial romance in the context of black migration to postwar Britain. These two postwar plays, which Tippett likely saw in London, may well have served as a useful precedent for him to explore similar themes.

The Knot Garden ostensibly situates itself more fully within the racial environment of the 1960s via another set of source materials that constitute an array of cultural references to diasporic blackness. Throughout the 1960s, the task of composing *The Knot Garden* increasingly became a vehicle for Tippett to array references to black culture from across the transatlantic black diaspora and to accrue antiracist credentials in accordance with liberal prerogatives of racial knowledge. The opera cites antiracist cultural movements most clearly via a quotation of the well-known anthem of the postwar U.S. civil rights movement, "We Shall Overcome." Tippett also appropriates several other musical references to African American experiences, including stylistic elements of blues, boogie-woogie, ragtime, and rhythm and blues.[54] Likewise, Tippett's score for the opera includes parts for drum-kit and electric guitar, unprecedented

[53] In the early 1960s, it is possible that Tippett debated interpretation and staging of *The Tempest* in his discussions with the director Peter Brook, at that time still something of an *enfant terrible* of British theatre. On Brooks' iconoclastic 1968 production of *The Tempest* (staged in London at the Round House theatre in 1969), see Margaret Croyden, "Peter Brook's *Tempest*," *The Drama Review: TDR* 13, no. 3 (Spring 1969): 125–28. Tippett's last work, "Caliban's Song" (1995), returns to the play.

[54] He adapted from descriptions and analyses of this music in two recently published reference works: Wilfred Mellers' *Music in a New Found Land: Themes and Developments in the History of American Music* (London: Barrie and Rocklift, 1964) and *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* (London: HarperCollins, 1963) by Amiri Baraka (who published it as LeRoi Jones). See Schuttenhelm, *Selected Letters*, 338.

additions to the Royal Opera House orchestra. Another important influence on Tippett was the dramatic and literary work of James Baldwin. *The Knot Garden* includes quotations from Baldwin's novel *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953) and the play *Blues for Mister Charlie* (1963), produced in London in 1964.[55] Furthermore, Tippett seems to have based one of the opera's characters on the black, queer, diasporic figure of Baldwin himself.[56] In this way, *The Knot Garden* asserts itself as a *tour de force* rendering of black diasporic culture, showcasing its white composer's studied familiarity with blackness, as well as anatomizing a series of contemporary, interracial encounters between Tippett and Baldwin via their avatars in the opera.

Including the "analyst" Mangus (baritone) and Tippett's autobiographical "musician" Dov (tenor), there are in total seven characters in the opera. This relatively small cast is staged all the more intimately by Tippett's decision to dispense with an opera chorus. Faber (baritone) is a "civil engineer," married to Thea (mezzo-soprano). Flora (soprano), an "adolescent girl," is their "ward," while Denise (soprano), Thea's sister, is identified as "a dedicated freedom fighter." Finally, Mel (baritone) is "a negro writer in his late twenties," who, with Dov, forms an interracial, same-sex couple. Reminiscent of James Baldwin, Mel centers many of the opera's concerns with racial difference, desire and intimacy and between strangers. Tippett complicates the opera's concept of character severely by assigning four of these characters an alternative identity based on a role in *The Tempest*: Mangus at times appears as Prospero, the magician and

[55] See Douglas Field, *James Baldwin* (Tavistock, UK: Northcote, 2011).
[56] See Gloag, "Tippett's Operatic World," 252. Baldwin had achieved fame and notoriety in London in the late 1950s and early 1960s, especially with the embattled publication of novel *Giovanni's Room* (1956), first published in London. See Kevin Birmingham, "'History's Ass Pocket': The Sources of Baldwinian Diaspora," in *James Baldwin: American and Beyond*, eds. Cora Kaplan and Bill Schwarz (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), 141–58; and Kate Houlden, "Andrew Salkey, James Baldwin, and the Case of the 'Leading Aberrant': Early Gay Narratives in the British Media," in *LGBT Transnational Identity and the Media*, ed. Christopher Pullen (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 146–160.

"master," including of the play's apocryphal storm; the "adolescent" Flora becomes the similarly aged Miranda; Dov assumes the role of Ariel, an "airy" "spirit" and "slave" to Prospero; and Mel's alter-ego becomes Shakespeare's island-dwelling "monster," Caliban.

Significantly, *The Knot Garden* is Tippett's first opera set in "the present," as the score states unequivocally. Tippett's provisional putting-together of various unlikely assemblages finds its way into the final score of the opera as a play of erotic, violent and fleeting encounters between its characters on stage and, in its soundworld, a rapid-fire juxtaposition of musical styles, quotations, textures, and timbres. It is a decidedly short opera, lasting only around eighty-five minutes in performance. The action takes place in "a high-walled house-garden shutting out an industrial city," yet each act also features the workings of a giant "machine," which Tippett describes in the score as a "labyrinth… [that] appears, if at all, as a maze which continually shifts and possibly… spins." The "labyrinth" has the "power to 'suck in'… and eject" characters, and is ostensibly under the control of Mangus. *The Knot Garden* is divided into three acts: "Confrontation," "Labyrinth," and "Charade," which together comprise a series of 32 brief, highly sectionalized and seemingly disjointed scenes.[57] The "dramatic action is discontinuous," Tippett writes in the score, "like the cutting of a film."

In Act One, "Confrontation," Mangus presides over a series of conflicts between pairs of characters.[58] Mangus enters as psychoanalyst, complete with the requisite prop of a "couch." His acts of "psychoanalysis" provide a pretext to dramatize the "inner drives" of the garden's rich assortment of seven inhabitants. The remaining scenes of Act One introduce the series of

[57] Schuttenhelm, *Selected Letters*, 154.
[58] This is an aspect of the opera that several commentators have compared to the plot and themes of *Così fan tutte*. For example, see Kemp, *Tippett*, 404.

encounters that takes place across *The Knot Garden*. Scene 3 spotlights Faber's unwelcome sexual advances toward the "adolescent" Flora, while Scenes 4 and 5 stage a confrontation between Faber and his wife, Thea. Scored for Flora alone, Scene 8 ironizes the tranquility of the private garden setting. As she delicately picks flowers, Flora sings ("to herself") what soon becomes the racially inflammatory version of a nineteenth-century nursery rhyme: "Eeny, meeny miny moe… Catch a nigger by his toe." Cutting her song short, Mel and Dov enter (Scene 9), as if suddenly drawing attention to the invocation of blackness in Flora's song. In Scene 12, Faber attempts a sexual assignation with Dov; the implication here is that Faber responds to a homosexual desire that he has not recognized in himself before. The "finale" of Act One (Scene 13) begins with the unexpected entry of Denise. In an extended aria, she reports on her experiences of "torture," rendered particularly searing in her description of "the indecent anguish of the quiv'ring flesh." The last section of this scene (Tempo di blues) comprises a grandly proportioned blues-based septet, which opens with a slow love-duet between Mel and Dov. Finally, Mangus brings the septet to a halt with a spoken, direct address to the audience, quoting Prospero's soliloquy in the epilogue of *The Tempest* ("And my ending is despair…").

Act Two, "Labyrinth," further undermines the bourgeois isolation of its "garden" setting. Under the control of Mangus, the "house-garden" is dismantled by the intrusion of the mechanical "labyrinth," which "throws" together different pairings of characters. Faber again tries to assault Flora (Scene 3), before Thea punishes him, "striking Faber with a horse-whip" (Scene 4). In Scene 5, the operation of the "labyrinth" narrowly prevents Faber from raping Dov. As Faber is whirled away, Mel is whisked on stage (Scene 6), precipitating an acrimonious duet for Dov and Mel. Scene 7 stages a duet for Denise and Mel on the topic of racial equality. Imploring Mel to stand up for black solidarity ("Your race calls you"), Denise advocates

stridently for "freedom, justice, dignity," while Mel begins to sing the civil rights anthem "We Shall Overcome." In a duet with Flora (Scene 9), Dov confesses his identification with femininity. In an extended "song" (Scene 10), Dov then recounts aspects of his personal history, including an impassioned description of the city of his birth, in which "buildings… scrape the sky" and "palm trees" wreathe "the golden Californian west": the city of Los Angeles as imagined by a postwar British liberal.[59] Act Two finishes with an interjection from Mel, who reminds Dov of the cultural and material debt he owes to people of color: "Come, I taught you that," he states, demanding that Dov acknowledge that his image of metropolitan liberation—and, in particular, his appropriation of blues-rock in his "song"—is "false." Dov voices what Bowen believes was Tippett's "desire to live emotionally within America," while Mel opens such cosmopolitan fantasy to question.[60]

In "Charade," the opera's third and final act, adaptations and quotations from *The Tempest* prepare the ground for the opera to shine a particularly harsh light on connections between race and desire in the intimate lives of its characters. In particular, the overlap of Mangus and Prospero dramatizes the latter's role in *The Tempest* as the colonial authority governing even the most intimate aspects of his subjects' lives. Tippett's early sketch of this act provides a useful summary of both Tippett's intentions and the emphases in the final version of the score:

> In Act 3 we need some surrealist goings-on (with Mangus trying to play Prospero?)… this means, I think, that the spring or fountain is highly metaphoricised… and the music must be equally "dadaist" or "absurd"…. From

[59] On 1960s British public discourse constructing Los Angeles as a liberal cultural icon, see Edward Dimendberg, "The Kinetic Icon: Reyner Banham on Los Angeles as Mobile Metropolis," *Urban History* 33, no. 1 (May 2006): 106–25.
[60] Quoted in John Ardoin, "Tippett in America," *Opera Quarterly* 4, no. 4 (1986): 1–20; 1.

> this point everything and everybody unwinds until Faber and Thea are alone and together for the first time… which is the curtain.[61]

In this act, the action is transplanted from the "garden" to the remote and unidentified island of *The Tempest* (Mangus dictates in Scene 1, "this garden now an island").

Certain sections of the act, such as Scenes 2 and 4, stage a "pre-history" of *The Tempest*. As the characters' Shakespearean alter egos come to the fore, Act Three ostensibly questions the relationship between the "present-day" characters and their Shakespearean counterparts, beginning with a fleeting and cutting exchange between Dov and Mel in Scene 2 ("I do but play my part." "O, no: you go beyond the script"). In Act Three, references to *The Tempest* underline the power of pre-existing cultural "scripts" over the opera's characters, while the deliberate confusion between Shakespearean and operatic characters highlights the ways in which Tippett conceived *The Knot Garden* in experimental terms.

Scene 4 of Act Three, a particularly charged episode in the opera, illustrates many of these themes. It stages Mel–Caliban's attempt to rape Flora–Miranda, while the question of identifying the "surrealism" of the events is left open. As Tippett's stage directions dictate, Mel–Caliban "creeps… up to" Flora–Miranda, "tries to tear the clothes off her," "pinning her with his arms" before Denise finally "hauls him off." The only scene in *The Knot Garden* scored entirely without vocal parts, Tippett's orchestral music is given the task of narrating the action on stage.

On the one hand, this scene issues a resounding condemnation of Mel–Caliban as dangerous and savage, literalizing and thus also corroborating Prospero's claim in *The Tempest* that Caliban once "di[d] seek to violate" Mirada (I.2.499) prior to the timeframe of the play. While the quietly ominous sounds of bass clarinet, contra-bassoon, timpani, piano, cellos and

[61] Schuttenhelm, *Selected Letters*, 382.

double basses in these instruments' lowest register signal Mel–Caliban's approach (Figs. 393 and 394), his "sudde[n]" contact with Flora–Miranda is illustrated by a louder, rapid, ascending gesture, organized as a strictly 12-tone row of pitches, harmonized in unison octaves (rehearsal number 396). Overtly phallic, the violently thumping low-register chords in the following two measures (rehearsal number 396 mm. 2–3 and rehearsal mark) return to the first three notes of the same tone-row as a vertical sonority, introducing a dissonant diminished fifth in the bass. Finally, Mel–Caliban's actions are emphasized by a searing fanfare-like figure (rehearsal number 397 mm. 1–2), which creates a jarring polyrhythm with low-register chords. Scored for tubular bells and electric guitar, its highly unusual and, in this context, unnatural-sounding timbre underscores Mel–Caliban's exotic and dangerous sexuality. (In the first production of the opera in 1970, the staging of this scene culminated in Flora–Miranda, played by soprano Jill Gomez, being rendered nude on stage.)[62] Understood in this way, the scene starkly reproduces the kind of stereotypical narratives of black men's potent sexuality and white women's potential vulnerability that circulated widely in postwar British public discourse.[63]

On the other hand, the scene challenges these cultural repertoires by tracing their authorship back to white or colonial power. As part of Mangus–Prospero's "Charade," the rape is conspicuously stylized. Throughout the scene, Mangus–Prospero observes the action voyeuristically "through a telescope," before he "signals to Dov–Ariel to be ready," presumably to rescue Flora–Miranda as required. Mangus–Prospero is exposed as the mastermind behind the action, the author and authority of the social "script" that requires the myth of the black rapist.

---

[62] See Michael Church, "You Should Be in Opera: Trinidad's Jill Gomez," *Caribbean Beat* 7 (September–October 1993).
[63] See Ashley Dawson, *Mongrel Nation: Diasporic Culture and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 29.

As Homi Bhabha has argued, racist stereotypes such as this both found and impel colonial power, which must continually produce a disruptive other in order to assert the superiority of the colonizer. Whereas colonialism is often outwardly justified on the basis of racist schemas of human difference, Bhabha identifies colonial power as the author and origin of racial hierarchies, even while the colonizer remains trapped in a perpetual need for the colonized.[64] Dramatizing the profound "ambivalence" of colonial discourse, this scene leaves open the question of whether Mel–Caliban's actions reflect the "inner values" of his desire or the colonialist social "script" he has been assigned in the "charade." Its shock effect thus lies not only in the rape but in the challenge it poses to the interpretive task of separating racial stereotypes from colonial relations of power.[65]

In its final scenes, these ambiguities unravel further. In a denouement given in a direct address at "the footlights," Mangus–Prospero confesses to being a fraud ("Prospero's a fake, we all know that"), wrested from the roles of imperialist author and psychoanalytic expert, and newly cognizant of the injustice with which he has treated Mel–Caliban.[66] The singers join in renditions of Ariel's songs "Full Fathom Five" and "Come unto these Yellow Sands" from *The Tempest*, as if shedding their characters—and the maintenance of theatrical illusion—altogether. While the opera seems to remain unresolved in narrative terms, the stage songs from *The Tempest* focus attention on the music and on music-making, and therefore ultimately to the

[64] Homi Bhabha, "The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination, and the Discourse of Colonialism [1994]," in *The Location of Culture*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2012), 94–120. Also see Philip Hodlen, "Rethinking Colonial Discourse Analysis and Queer Studies," in *Imperial Desire: Dissident Sexualities and Colonial Literature*, eds. Philip Holden and Richard J. Ruppel (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 295–322.
[65] See Kobena Mercer, "Skin Head Sex Thing: Racial Difference and the Homoerotic Imaginary," in *How Do I Look? Queer Film and Video*, ed. Bad Object-Choices (Seattle, WA: Bay Press, 1991).
[66] Chantal Zabus comments that such a "demystification" of narrative power is common in what she calls "postmodern" *Tempest* rewrites. See Chantal Zabus, *Tempests after Shakespeare* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 177.

constructedness—the aesthetic and institutional conventions—of the entire operatic sound and spectacle: "I am all imagination," Thea remarks in a markedly unoperatic, monotone *Sprechtstimme* in the opera's closing measures. The action of the opera finally dissolves with Thea and Faber's ironic and self-reflexive line "the curtain rises," as if returning to the currents of real life. A roaring, thickly textured "sound mass" of orchestral music seems to confirm Mangus–Prospero's prophesy that the "island [will] sink into the sea." *The Knot Garden* relinquishes the task of disclosing connections between racism and desire in the intimate lives of its characters, leaving the "brave new world" (as Flora remarks earlier in Act Three) on which "the curtain rises" to the audience's imagination.

Staging Autobiography

Tippett's remarks about the performance of *The Knot Garden* in 1970 suggest that the production breached the protocol of the proscenium arch at the Royal Opera House, allowing the performance literally to traverse the division between stage and auditorium:

> Peter [Hall, the director] obtained permission to take away the (sacred!) prompt-box and build out across the orchestra pit… [At the end of] Act 3, he was able to bring all the characters out to the front, turn off the film and stage-lighting so that one just saw the bare ropes, and bring up the house lights… Real theatre.[67]

By Tippett's account, at least, *The Knot Garden* seeks to break the mold of operatic production techniques that were more typical at Covent Garden—the omnipotent rule of the proscenium arch, the velvet curtain and the "prompt box"—and to achieve a sense of intimacy with its audience. As the house "curtain" makes an appearance in the libretto, and the singers are illuminated by the house lights of the auditorium, Tippett's opera threatens to dismantle the

[67] Tippett, *Those Twentieth-Century Blues*, 222.

distinction between performance and reality, an aesthetic strategy that is neatly captured in Tippett's contradictory description of its final scenes as "real theatre."

Yet *The Knot Garden* is from the start an opera that obscures the aesthetic boundary between inside and outside. While the premiere production of *The Knot Garden* in 1970 employed a thrust stage that literally spanned stage and auditorium, Tippett's score gestures toward a blurring of the distinction between operatic representation and reality, resembling the avant-garde aesthetic preoccupation with what Peter Bürger has termed "reality fragments."[68] *The Knot Garden* situates itself among the real life of its contemporary surroundings via the array of cultural borrowings that populate and punctuate its score: the prominent quotation of the postwar civil rights anthem "We Shall Overcome," the incongruous sounds of the electric guitar, distinct references to contemporary literary and dramatic works, pastiche composition in a number of styles of African American popular music, and a libretto marked by what seemed in the Royal Opera House like jarringly modish verbal idioms epitomizing the transatlantic youth culture of the 1960s. All these elements exemplify the ways in which *The Knot Garden* points repeatedly, even relentlessly, to a real-life world outside the operatic performance.[69] In other words, the opera performs what Timothy Morton calls an "ambient poetics," the desire to give the reader—or the audience—an illusion of immediacy, not least an "immediate" access to Tippett himself.[70] As it borrows conspicuously from a range of iconic and contemporary cultural

[68] Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 72.
[69] In addition, textual quotations in the libretto are often placed in quotation marks, drawing the performers' (if not the audience's) attention to its status as a "composite" work.
[70] See Timothy Morton, *Ecology Without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

references, including Tippett's autobiography, *The Knot Garden* makes a bid to situate itself within the real or everyday life world occupied by its audience.

Tippett's innovative operatic language forms a key component of *The Knot Garden*'s claim to intervene in its social environment. Rejecting an interpretation of collage composition as simply "full of empty play," David Metzer suggests that techniques of musical borrowing such as Tippett's "creat[e] an unceasing interaction" between the "prior" cultural associations of the quoted materials and the new composition into which existing fragments of music and sound have been imported.[71] The borrowed components, Metzer implies, leave the collage composition fundamentally open to the task of interpretation, such that the audience cannot ignore its wider implications. References in the opera to blackness and black diasporic culture insist upon a renewed consideration of race on the part the audience.[72] This is especially the case where scenes of interracial encounter employ the shock tactic of exposing an "erotic life of racism." Within a liberal framework that called upon white Britons to tackle racism "at home," *The Knot Garden* signposts contemporary Britain as the setting for its performance of race, desire and intimacy, while at the same time challenging its audience members to reevaluate their role in maintaining a set of social scripts concerning racial division.

This use of "reality fragments" in *The Knot Garden* is no more striking than in Tippett's identification with Dov, and his identification of this character as autobiographical. This emerges as a central theme in Scenes 9 and 10 of Act Two, which begins as a duet for Dov and Flora. Dov empathizes with Flora's desire to sing "a boy's song," or adopt a cross-gendered

[71] David Metzer, *Quotation and Cultural Meaning in Twentieth-Century Music* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 156; 5–6.
[72] See Holland, *The Erotic Life of Racism*.

identification with an established social script.[73] Marked by an arresting change in the opera's tonal soundworld, the duet includes a quotation of "Die liebe Farbe" from Schubert's song-cycle *Die schöne Müllerin*, in its original key of B minor. After Flora sings half a stanza of the *Lied*, Tippett repeats Schubert's melody in the orchestra, overlain by Dov's English "translation" and a series of filigree-like gestures in the piano part that echo both a Schubertian technique of thematic variation and an improvised jazz solo ("'I will dress myself in green, in green weeping willows[.] My love's so fond of green'"). As if foreshadowing Susan McClary, Charles Fisk and others' insistence on the queer subjectivity in Schubert's music, Tippett uses this quotation in such a way that resonates with themes in *The Knot Garden* of nature, desire, and the re-making of seemingly natural identities.[74] These themes come together especially saliently in allusions to "dress[ing]" oneself in "green weeping willows" and a "fond[ness]" for "green" in Dov's "translation" of Willhelm Müller's poem. As Dov "translates" the Schubert song, this scene emphasizes Tippett's particular identity as curator and purveyor of Western classical music, while also reiterating Tippett's insistence on the possibility of resituating non-normative or queer sexualities as "natural." In *The Knot Garden*, autobiography becomes a mode of inscribing the performance of the opera into the social text.

This deliberate attempt to blur the boundary between inside and outside has clear implications for an opera intended to expose connections between contemporary racism and sexual practices demanded by modern, "industrial" society. Of particular importance in this

[73] Kenneth Gloag also makes this point. See Gloag, "Tippett's Operatic World."
[74] See Susan McClary, "Constructions of Subjectivity in Schubert's Music" [1994], in *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*, eds. Philip Brett, Elizabeth Wood, and Gary C. Thomas, 2nd edition (New York: Routledge, 2006), 205–33; and Charles Fisk, *Returning Cycles: Contexts for the Interpretation of Schubert's Impromptus and Last Sonatas* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001). Elsewhere, Tippett described in Schubert's Lieder a "musical agency for the acceptance of sadness in a context of love." See Tippett, *Music of the Angels*, 220.

regard in *The Knot Garden* are scenes that anatomize interracial encounters between the opera's on-stage representatives of real-life, contemporary figures. As a vehicle for Tippett's self-representation, the opera stages quite literally the white liberal admonition to inspect one's own conduct regarding people of color, while its *tour de force* reckoning with black diasporic culture becomes an occasion for Tippett to partake in a narrative of achieving a liberal-antiracist moral and psychological disposition. Moreover, by casting the character Mel as an avatar for James Baldwin in all but name, Tippett organizes *The Knot Garden* around a scrutiny of his own political and sexual desire for blackness, especially during scenes that imagine a series of queer, interracial intimacies between Dov/Tippett and Mel/Baldwin. Such scenes in *The Knot Garden* emphasize the exposure of erotic and psychological dimensions of racism, claiming Tippett and Baldwin as the social actors installed in the operatic performance.

For example, the substantial duet in Act Two turns the spotlight on the relationship between Dov and Mel, while the scene also becomes an occasion for Tippett to reflect on his own desire for black masculinity. The duet juxtaposes sections of hostility and accord in a bebop-like alternation of fast blues-tempo "verse" and "chorus" sections. Tippett's orchestration throughout the scene duly features electric guitar, heavy percussion, pizzicato double bass and rapid licks for wind instruments. At times, Dov and Mel perform fragments of a lively, freely atonal refrain, the text of which speaks of a joyous, interracial future ("One day, we'll be together, brother"). Notably, these sections of the duet are some of only a few instances in *The Knot Garden* of rhythmic unison between vocal lines. At the same time, however, Mel and Dov's music implies different tonal centers of G and D, respectively, a bitonality that suggests any unity formed between them in the duet is both playful and provisional (see rehearsal number 262). It glimpses an ecstatic union less bound by racial conflict, the utopian potential of which is

shrewdly undercut by its conflicting harmonic centers. Its "music is bittersweet," as Denise later remarks of the encounter.

At other points in the duet, however, Dov/Tippett and Mel/Baldwin clash much more vociferously. Mel pointedly accuses Dov of fetishizing black masculinity ("You love the manhood not the *man*… Strip off the sham!... You call me brother, where [there]'s no family between black and white!"), before Dov accuses Mel of being afflicted by the "shame" of taking a white or male lover (at rehearsal number 262). Trying in vain to win Mel over with exaggerated remorse, Dov assumes the role of a dog, prostrating himself and reverting to unpitched, wordless howling. Dov's performance of canine subordination invokes sadomasochistic sexual role-play, as well as a white, imperialist fantasy of hyper-virile black masculinity. Mel demands an end to the "play-acting," and the "maze" finally whisks Dov away. These sections of the duet thus reflect Tippett's notion of the parallels between sadomasochistic sexual desire and social structures of racial oppression and privilege. Taking a cue from race relations discourse, Dov/Tippett and Mel/Baldwin's encounter in the opera maintains that racism is ordinary, and takes place "unthinkingly" in everyday occurrences. Via an appeal to the "real-life" figures of Tippett and Baldwin, this scene corrals contemporary social reality for its violent and intimate performance of race and sexuality, forcing "the compelling connections between racism and the erotic" into the spotlight.

This scene in the opera pointedly refuses to sentimentalize queer or interracial intimacy. Rather, it stages a vehement encounter between Dov/Tippett and Mel/Baldwin that exposes racial difference as the locus of both desire and violence. In particular, Mel's criticism of the "sham" of Dov's desire for blackness echoes Baldwin's strident criticisms of "the white liberal." While Tippett may have witnessed one of Baldwin's public talks in London during the late

1960s, it was likely Baldwin's play *Blues for Mister Charlie* that caught Tippett's attention. Given in London in a brief run of performances in 1965, *Blues for Mister Charlie* concludes with a scene in which a white liberal breaks ranks to join a civil rights protest, dramatizing the limits and possibilities of white solidarity with black struggle.[75] Arming Mel with a Baldwinian critique of a white liberal desire for blackness, Tippett subjects Dov's cross-racial desires to scrutiny, even while the duet also questions the "shame" Mel feels in his desire toward white masculinity. Darieck Scott has argued that queer interracial intimacy can play a central role in exposing the kinds of power relations and inequalities that undergird all forms of desire. Because the "black/white" queer couple is often treated to "suspicious readings," Scott suggests, it has been able to "rescu[e] desire from the mysterious realm of romance."[76] Likewise, the duet for Dov/Tippett and Mel/Baldwin dramatizes a suspicious reading that situates interracial intimacy within racial and racist fantasy, insisting that homosexual desire is not necessarily any less racist than heterosexual desire.[77] Moreover, Mel's tirade against Dov's racial fetishism becomes an occasion for Tippett to question his own complicity with unequal relations of power, directing suspicion also toward himself. This scene thus portrays Tippett as both inside and outside the opera: as compromised by racial thinking and ridding himself of skewed beliefs.

Yet the duet also bears witness to a privileged racial formation in the making. As its suspicious reading of the encounter between Dov/Tippett and Mel/Baldwin complicates an identification of Dov as autobiographical, this scene in *The Knot Garden* becomes an occasion

[75] See Lynn Orilla Scott, "Challenging the American Conscience, Re-Imagining American Identity: James Baldwin and the Civil Rights Movement," in *A Historical Guide to James Baldwin*, ed. Douglas Field (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 141–76.
[76] Darieck Scott, "Jungle Fever? Black Gay Identity, White Dick, and the Utopian Bedroom," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 1, no. 3 (1994): 299–321; 301.
[77] See Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence*, 333.

for Tippet to disown a white fascination with black masculinity that nevertheless remains constitutive of the opera as a whole. Framed by bebop's aggressive soundworld and Baldwin's acerbic criticism, Tippett's attempt to identify "corrupt" forms of sex and desire calibrates the discovery of an unconflicted sexuality to a white appropriation of black diasporic culture. The duet enables Tippett to demonstrate familiarity with blackness without the act of appropriation appearing to be (or sounding like) an act of racial power. In other words, it attempts to rationalize white privilege on the basis of having accomplished a liberal-antiracist moral and psychological disposition.

Refracted through a liberal-antiracist lens, whiteness is conflated in this scene with a universal position from which to adjudicate between "acceptable" and "unacceptable" forms of sex and desire. Most problematic, Tippett's suspicious reading of interracial intimacy becomes a vehicle for "shaming" Mel/Baldwin for his sexual attachment to blackness and his reluctance publicly to "admit" same-sex desire. While this makes no acknowledgement of the material and other conditions on which racial, cultural, and social mobility depends, it also functions more pointedly as a normalizing strategy that punishes forms of blackness incompatible with the opera's unfulfilled vision of racial and sexual harmony, including black isolation and sexual deviance. Mel/Baldwin's discomfort with maintaining an intimate proximity to whiteness and his refusal to embody the autonomous and "conscious" subject of Marcusian sexual liberation become signs of black pathology.

As it condemns the nefarious effects of racism on interracial intimacy, the duet for Dov/Tippett and Mel/Baldwin forecloses discussion of black political, cultural, and sexual autonomy, restricting antiracist values to those that can maintain existing structural inequalities. As such, this scene dramatizes a set of white liberal anxieties in 1960s Britain regarding the

capacity of postcolonial black Britons for full compliance with certain social norms. For many white liberals during this period, the black ghetto posed a significant obstacle to the racial "integration" of postcolonial Britain. Concerns rose that blackness had become concentrated at the heart of British cities, foreclosing the kind of opportunities for interracial contact that race relations discourse posited as restorative.[78] Moreover, black British ghettos could serve another purpose as the imagined site of sexual violence. As Paul Gilroy notes, the growth of Britain's postcolonial black population in the 1950s was accompanied by a series of "[l]urid newspaper reports of black pimps living off the immoral earnings of white women."[79] Such intertwined narratives of sexual and economic exchange had no place within the Marcusian Left's conception of a liberated society, while the figure of the black sexual criminal raised the alarming possibility that the formerly colonized would be hopelessly unfit for metropolitan British life. For example, the British race relations "expert" Anthony H. Richmond argued in 1955 that direct "consequences of slavery" in the West Indies could be found within certain "psychological" maladies among postcolonial black Britons, including "the widespread practice of… cheating employers" and "the virtual collapse of the social institution of marriage."[80] Black impoverishment, disenfranchisement and ghettoization in postwar Britain could be justified as the legitimate expression of black Britons' presumed pathological incompatibility with liberal values. Viewed in this light, liberal antiracism in 1960s Britain can be seen as having split the difference between "acceptable" and "unacceptable" blacknesses, claiming blackness as both a

[78] Smith, *New Right Discourse on Race and Sexuality*, 139.
[79] Gilroy, *"There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack,"* 79.
[80] Richmond, *The Colour Problem.*

constitutive condition of the modern British nation and a dangerous remnant of a forgotten colonial past.

Locating Blackness in *The Knot Garden*

Filtered through a nexus of desire and suspicion, Tippett's ambivalence about blackness permeates *The Knot Garden*. While the final scenes of the opera ostensibly denounce the "lust for Caliban" that impels Dov's—and, by implication, also Tippett's—actions, to what extent does this reinscribe racist ideology, such as the colonialist control over the sexual intimacy of the colonized?[81] The unsettling effect of these and other deliberate ambiguities in Tippett's score perhaps registers in the problem of the opera's interpretation.

Since its first performance *The Knot Garden* has often seemed to leave writers at a loss. Several music critics at the opera's premiere in 1970 struggled to write positively about the piece. For instance, John Warrack warned readers of *The Musical Times* about the "confusion and disarray… [that] pervades the score," while a writer in *The Evening Standard* complained that "in this particular garden you cannot see the wood for the trees."[82] Furthermore, the musicologist Winton Dean stated in 1971 that because the opera tries so hard to "say something relevant today," it "tumbles into obscurity."[83] Dean noted that *The Knot Garden* broaches "issues like… homosexuality and the colour question that are usually excluded from the opera house,"

[81] As Ann Laura Stoler explains, colonial governance "resituates the intimate as a zone vulnerable to a crushing nearness and arbitrary intrusion into the everyday." See Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*, 2nd edition (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010), xvii.
[82] John Warrack, "The Knot Garden," *The Musical Times* 111, no. 1533 (November 1970): 1092–95. [Editorial], "Up the Garden Path," *Evening Standard* (1970), reproduced in Colin Davis et al, eds., *A Man of Our Time* (London: Schott, 1977), 95.
[83] Winton Dean, "Music in London" [review of *The Knot Garden*, Royal Opera House, December 1970], *Musical Times* 112, no. 1535 (January 1971): 47–49; 47.

but argued that its "open-endedness" may well prove counter-productive in this regard. Precisely because of what Dean maintained was the opera's timeliness, *The Knot Garden* was in danger of remaining unnoticed by "the wider public that opera needs to capture." *The Knot Garden* fails to differentiate itself sufficiently, Dean implied, from a contemporary society ("usually excluded from the opera house"), while the opera's very topicality could threaten even its short-lived success. An inestimable number of trees rather than a neatly bounded wood: *The Knot Garden* allegedly blends with its real-life surroundings (including "homosexuality and the colour question"), perhaps precipitating the disappearance of operatic tradition into the chaotic and expansive space of everyday life. Early critics of *The Knot Garden* thus stumbled on its ambient poetics, seemingly unable to distinguish the opera's themes and characters from the rapidly shifting contours of postcolonial British life.

More recent critics have rarely been more sympathetic. For example, the British music critic Norman Lebrecht took the occasion of the Tippett Centenary in 2005 to assess what he alleges is Tippett's incalculable "damage to British music," suggesting that Tippett, whom he describes as "pacifist, leftist [and] gay," should be "a composer to forget." In particular, Lebrecht refers to *The Knot Garden* as "a rambling indulgence in late-Sixties psychobabble," only made palatable in the first production because "the director… ordered one of the singers to drop her top—historically the first such exposure on the Royal Opera stage." Lebrecht continues:

> Discovering America's sexual freedoms, Tippett pranced about in hippie sandals and injected transatlantic rhythms into his later works, without winning many new friends.[84]

[84] Norman Lebrecht, "Michael Tippett: A Composer to Forget," *The Lebrecht Report*, December 22, 2004, <http://www.scena.org/columns/lebrecht/041222-NL-tippett.html>.

In this polemic, Lebrecht feigns indifference regarding the production's "historical" defiance of social and cultural conventions that he suggests have previously governed women's representation in opera, while reserving condemnation for Tippett's newfound "sexual freedoms," which he considers direly disintegrative for Tippett's music. Lebrecht thus shares with Tippett the idea that human sexuality is possessed of an inherently subversive power, which—unlike Tippett and others on the "Freudian Left"—he considers alarming.[85] In his call to "forget" Tippett, Lebrecht thus cannot include Tippett's music as part of a new discourse of certainty about race that substantiated claims asserting the benevolence of British white liberals.

In a rather different account of *The Knot Garden*, Philip Brett and Elizabeth Wood claim the opera as a historical event of signal importance for their essay "Gay and Lesbian Music" in the 2001 *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*:

> Mel and Dov, the inter-racial couple in Tippett's *The Knot Garden* (1970), appear to be opera's first 'out' gay males; predictably, they break up, one of them returning to heterosexual lifestyle.[86]

Although Brett and Wood's essay mentions what they suggest are the opera's shortcomings as "gay male" cultural representation, this seminal text of queer musicology does not examine race so critically. It discusses blackness in *The Knot Garden* only as a negative deviation from the ("gay") "couple," whose "inter-racial" quality is made to bear an unremarkable equivalence to the social reality of race. "Gay and Lesbian Music" thus dissents from the opera's representation of sexuality, even while reproducing its ambient poetics of race. Instead, what is needed is a

[85] On the connections between liberal and conservative views of sexual liberation in postwar Britain, see Jonathan Dollimore, "The Challenge of Sexuality," in *Society and Literature, 1945–1970*, ed. Alan Sinfield (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1983), 80. Elsewhere, Lebrecht has replicated oft-repeated accusations of a "homosexual cabal" operating in the postwar British opera world. See Norman Lebrecht, *Covent Garden—The Untold Story: Dispatches from the English Culture War, 1945–2000* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2000).
[86] Brett and Wood, "Gay and Lesbian Music."

fuller account of blackness in *The Knot Garden* and an understanding of the opera's relationship to hegemonic forms of racial knowledge. In contrast to formulaic notions of interracial intimacy as simply either redemptive (utopian) or repressive (colonialist), the final sections of this chapter suggest how the historical conditions were established for particular forms of white–black encounter to signify a liberal discourse on race.

Although previous studies have hardly accounted for the role of race in Tippett's postwar music, several commentators have noted that Tippett's musical style changed dramatically during this period. In 1958, as be began work on *King Priam*, Tippett abandoned writing what Jonathan Cross describes as "essentially tonal, lyrical and continuous music," and turned instead toward a freely atonal and "block form" compositional technique.[87] Kemp also argues that Tippett's works from the late 1950s until the late 1970s explore "hard, intractable sonorities, an aggressively dissonant harmonic idiom and construction by means of stringing together gestures." Kemp positions *The Knot Garden* as a paradigmatic work in he calls this period of Tippett's "expressionism."[88] Kemp relates this to the fact that Tippett felt no affinity with twelve-tone serialism, which had become almost an orthodoxy in the 1950s.[89] Operating without much knowledge of the kinds of serial techniques developed by composers such as Boulez in the postwar period, Tippett equated serialism with "Schoenberg's twelve-note method," which for him seemed "alphabetic."[90] From the late 1950s onward, including in *The Knot Garden*,

[87] Cross, *The Stravinsky Legacy*, 63.
[88] Kemp, *Tippett*, 322.
[89] Nevertheless, Tippett was not alone among postwar British composers in maintaining what Phillip Rupprecht calls a "critical hostility to artistic abstraction." See Philip Rupprecht, "'Something Slightly Indecent': British Composers, the European Avant-Garde, and National Stereotypes in the 1950s," *Musical Quarterly* 91, nos. 3–4 (2009): 275–326; 276.
[90] Tippett, *Those Twentieth-Century Blues*, 274.

Tippett's technique of "stringing together gestures" exemplifies the distance he felt from what he understood as the much more systematic approach to composition demanded by serialism.

Tippett's "expressionism" and a liberal discourse on race were connected in a number of specific ways.[91] Beginning the late 1950s, Tippett's change of style coincided with his growing interest in blues music and other forms of black diasporic culture. In an essay on Arnold Schoenberg from 1965, Tippett contrasts blues with the "curiously paradoxical" image of Schoenberg holed up in his adoptive home of Los Angeles. The relic of a bygone age, Schoenberg was ironically located in the most modern place on earth. While blues music swept "around the world," Tippett suggests, Schoenberg became ever more the caricature of a trenchant modernist, trying in vain to "discover *the* inevitable solution" to musical harmony.[92] Tippett's autobiography, *Those Twentieth-Century Blues*, reiterates in its title his long-held admiration for this musical genre. Most importantly, perhaps, Tippett's reception of blues music also registers in his works of the two or three decades after 1945. As Tippett's first work to engage with the issue of racial equality, *The Knot Garden* allowed Tippett to explore the cultural archive of the black diaspora, especially the African American culture of the mid twentieth century that resonated with aspects of the postwar civil rights movement.

In the mid 1960s, he read two recently published studies of American music, Amiri Baraka's *Blues People* (1963) and Wilfred Mellers' *Music in a New Found Land* (1964), as well as visiting the U.S. in the summer of 1965. For Tippett, blues could stage cross-racial and transnational identification as antiracist value. He maintained that blues in *The Knot Garden* was

[91] David Clarke rather vaguely suggests that Tippett's interest from the 1960s onward in aspects of what he calls "postmodern society" represented the culmination of "a recognition of the significance of musical 'others' that was longstanding in Tippett's intellectual and creative consciousness." See Clarke, *The Music and Thought of Michael Tippett*, 226.
[92] Michael Tippett, "Schoenberg," in *Moving into Aquarius*, 99.

"a metaphor" for his artistic and other creative endeavors, assuring his readers that he had "never sought to imitate a Negro style or genre at all." At the same time, he advertised the ways in which blues allowed him to introduce blackness into works such as *The Knot Garden*, in which "Mel, the black writer, became the natural leader" during sections of the opera most inspired by blues music.[93] Here, the lone African American male—"the Negro with a guitar," as Tippett writes in his early sketch for *The Knot Garden*—carries the burden of responsibility for representing a white liberal-antiracist disposition, even while the cultural labor of the black diaspora is disavowed. Restricted to a particular narrative of race, gender, and sexuality, Tippett's appropriation of blues music helps explain how limited repertories of racial meaning rose to cultural dominance during the British "liberal hour."

Blues epitomized what Tippett referred to in the 1960s as today's "increasingly global" culture.[94] Rather than serialism, it was blues—the "indigenous popular music of America"—that had become "the most fundamental musical form of our time." It traverses racial and political boundaries of West and East, and incorporates musical styles "from Bali to New Orleans." In contrast, the art-music tradition of "the West," he suggested, bespeaks a "parochial content," which remains all but unrecognized in misguided descriptions of its natural superiority. Although "the language of music… is without racial frontiers," blues music, not Western art-music, had achieved this potential.[95] Tippett believed that blues could foster a musical culture across racial, geographic and political divisions, and thereby return Western art-music to racial and provincial specificity. As blues becomes a blueprint in his writing for cross-racial cultural exchange and

[93] Tippett, *Those Twentieth-Century Blues*, 274–75.
[94] Michael Tippett, "Towards the Condition of Music," in *Moving into Aquarius*, 26.
[95] Michael Tippett, "Too Many Choices," in *Moving into Aquarius*.

encounter, Tippett seeks to reposition the Western art-music tradition within a liberal epistemology of race that called on the white liberal to take responsibility for white isolation from people of color. Tippett offers blues music as an antidote to racial prejudice, conflating his privileged access to certain kinds of black diasporic cultural production with wider practices of cultural and social mobility.

Other writings by Tippett from this period expand upon this liberal-antiracist itinerary. In "Too Many Choices," an aesthetic manifesto published in 1959, Tippett makes a series of claims on behalf of the artist's role in society, a theme that preoccupies many of Tippett's published essays. In particular, he discusses the possibility that "the artist" may be able to diagnose and repair certain distinctions in contemporary society between an objective reality "outside the mind" and the "dominant social attitudes" that have come to colonize the mindset of the vast majority of people. Tippett is often quite specific about the kinds of "attitudes" that are at stake in his essay. His primary example is "the inner attitude of a color bar" that misrepresents the "external fact… [of] human pigmentation." He does not refer to the material conditions for people of color. Instead, racism becomes a problem of the "individual psyche."

By the late 1960s, Tippett was thinking more specifically in terms of the unfolding events of the U.S. civil rights movement and its transatlantic dimensions. Written in 1971 for a televised talk Tippett gave the next year, the essay "Poets in Barren Age" returns to the mantra that "the artist's job is… [t]o create a dream," suggesting that art can rail against "a society that appears to have little time for dreams" by creating "a momentary vision of possibility" for social transformation. Moreover, he compares the artist's "dream" to the "dream" of racial equality invoked in Martin Luther King's already internationally famous speech of 1963. Tippett also perhaps had in mind the sermon King gave at St. Paul's Cathedral in December 1964. To a

congregation of over 4,000, as well as an innumerable television audience, King expounded on what he called "the three dimensions of a complete life," also his title for the sermon. At a time when King's opponents in the U.S. were denouncing him as a Communist, the sermon in St. Paul's worked strategically to restore his credentials as a religious statesman, firmly on the Western side of the Cold War. While King's remarks on this occasion were tailored to enhance his establishment respectability in mid-1960s Britain and the U.S., Tippett's writing narrows racial meaning further and dissimulates the contestations over what has been called the civil rights compromise in the U.S.[96] By prioritizing individual over collective rights, Tippett's writing restricts antiracist value to personal psychology, leaving the role of race and migration in the economy of postwar Britain unexamined.

The American "dream" provided a particularly productive source of inspiration for Tippett. In 1964, the year of its publication, Tippett made a careful study of *Music in a New Found Land*, a hefty reference work by the British musicologist Wilfred Mellers. Many aspects of Mellers' work made it appealing to Tippett, first among them the strong bonds that Mellers often infers exist in African American music between a "natural" sexual subjectivity and effective black resistance to racial inequality. In music that "sends" its listeners and performers to the state of "orgasm," Mellers suggests, "we become aware of the Negro's resilience." Mellers locates both these aspects of social transformation in the performance of blues and other African American popular music, where what he refers to as a "heterophonic homophony" forges connections between intimate desires and social community. While Mellers reads twentieth-century African American music as a site of liberation from sexual and racial oppression, a much

[96] See David M. P. Freund, *Colored Property: State Policy and White Racial Politics in Suburban America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

wider category of American music—spanning four centuries and many different social contexts—emerges in his study as a utopian field of possibility, in which the "segregation of the genres" is unknown.[97] As a cultural object in mid-1960s Britain, Mellers's book not only conveyed the kind of liberal thinking on race and archival material of black music that Tippett was seeking, but also served as an important precedent for the kind of white liberal identification with blackness that *The Knot Garden* simultaneously advocates and disavows.

At this time, Tippett also studied Amiri Baraka's *Blues People: Negro Music in White America*, published in 1963 under the name LeRoi Jones.[98] *Blues People* seeks to provide an American national history that takes account of "the Negro's existence in this country," thereby charting "the *path* the slave took to 'citizenship.'" Baraka implies that African American music remains the only available evidence for the long history of a black diasporic culture with the U.S. at its center. For Baraka, this is a history of almost unthinkable resilience, of which black music became its muddiest and most indelible trace. While he does not gainsay the "conscious nonconformity" achieved by white blues and bebop fans of the 1950s and 1960s, Baraka notes that black Americans have no choice about whether to dissent from the "requirements of… society," for "merely by being a Negro in America, one *was* a nonconformist."

In its final chapters, *Blues People* introduces a theory of the "blues continuum" as an organizing aesthetic for a wide variety of twentieth-century African American musical styles, including gospel, boogie-woogie, ragtime and bebop. It was the "deeply personal quality of blues-singing," Baraka suggests, that rendered blues of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries widely influential on African American music. By emphasizing the fundamental unity

[97] Wilfrid Mellers, *Music in a New Found Land* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 274; 268; xiii.
[98] LeRoi Jones, *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* (New York: HarperCollins, 1963).

of black music, Baraka sought to raise consciousness of a black artistic and political sensibility, which he traces back as far as tribal cultures of sub-Saharan Africa. At the same time, however, Baraka is careful to situate the "private and personal" affect of blues performance historically within "the Negro's entrance into the world of professional entertainment," in which this particular style of blues performance quickly became an "imperative." In other words, Baraka does not make the market economy appear as the only context in which to recognize black cultural practice, but rather identifies the role of the "entertainment" industry in shaping blues music's conventions. Yet Tippett's comments on *Blues People* suggest that he overlooked Baraka's structural analysis. Instead, Tippett refers to blues music as an authentic index of the performer's subjectivity: "[Y]ou sing the blues… because you *are* 'blue,'" Tippett claimed.[99] While Baraka might have agreed with Tippett that "the blues is the most fundamental musical form of our time," Tippett's commentary leaves no trace of the historical-material production of blues music's ascension to cultural prominence in the postwar decades.

Tippett soon decided that bookwork needed to be supplemented by first-hand experience of American culture and society. The U.S. had by this time become his "dream country."[100] During July and August of1965, he visited New York City, Los Angeles and San Francisco.[101] In his writings, Tippett's descriptions of America both locate and conceal blackness. On the one hand, he speaks enthusiastically of the harmonious "mixture of races" that he found typified the coastal cities he visited, describing their "highly developed city culture, a polyglot culture."[102] On the other hand, Tippett ignores or occludes different types of interracial encounter in mid-1960s

[99] Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues,* 274.
[100] *Ibid*., 274.
[101] Ardoin, "Tippett in America."
[102] Tippett*, Those Twentieth Century Blues,* 249.

America. For instance, in the same month that Tippett was in Los Angeles, the infamous "Watts riots" in the city both exposed and served as the occasion for a violent criminalization of blackness and poverty in U.S. urban environments.[103] In Tippett's account of the U.S., blackness only appears as part of a metropolitan community and as a constitutive feature of a model democracy, while other racial formations that might challenge this account fall out of the picture.

Tippett's descriptions of America are very different from those of more radical commentators on race in 1960s Britain. Radical black political movements like the British Black Panther Party, writers in black British newspapers, and visitors to Britain such as Malcolm X sought to advance civil rights claims by highlighting similarities between African American ghettoization and the experiences of Britain's postcolonial black population. In 1964, the Trinidad-born black British activist Michael de Freitas even changed his name to Michael X.[104] In contrast, Tippett's report is restricted to a liberal vision of racial inclusion, folding blackness into a metropolitan and national culture. In other words, it imagines a postcolonial or racially mixed public sphere only after black uprising has been entirely contained and removed. With both black radicalism and state violence erased from the picture, Tippett's image of "harmonious" race relations thus provides the terms to stigmatize any racial and cultural deviations from this ideal, highlighting the ways in which liberal civil rights legislation in 1960s Britain was used to justify the exclusion of some black citizens from the presumed benefits of the "national community."

---

[103] On the "criminalization of race" in the context of the "Watts riots" and 1960s America, see Donna Murch, "The Many Meanings of Watts: Black Power, *Wattstax*, and the Carceral State," *Organization of American Historians Magazine of History* 26, no. 1 (2012): 37–40.

[104] Stephen Tuck, "Malcolm X's Visit to Oxford University: U.S. Civil Rights, Black Britain, and the Special Relationship on Race," *The American Historical Review* 118, no. 1 (2013): 76–103; 91–99.

Across all these sites, Tippett's research into African American music and the urban ecology of the U.S. had a formative and indelible influence on *The Knot Garden*. As his letters document, Tippett turned to Mellers' study as early as 1964, using it as a primary source material for the kinds of blues-like words and music he was planning to include in the opera.[105] In addition, Tippett states in *Those Twentieth-Century Blues* that he read *Blues People* "[w]hile exploring" various options for *The Knot Garden*.[106] Other writings by Tippett explicitly link *The Knot Garden* with his travels in the U.S.: "I had certainly been to America before I composed *The Knot Garden*," he maintains.[107] In her recent study, Genevieve Abravanel coins the term "Ameritopia" to refer to the particular set of fantasies and anxieties around the U.S. that pervaded much British culture of the early and mid twentieth century. Although some treated the purported Americanization of Britain with unease, for others Britons it functioned as a powerful "symbol mobilized by the imagination" of "a new world democracy, a postcolonial empire, [and] a unique entity in modern times."[108] Abravanel's work is particularly helpful for examining Tippett's "Ameritopia" and the symbolic capital of America in *The Knot Garden*'s performance of race and sexuality. For Tippett, American-ness connoted both aesthetic and political possibility, while the African American music of the "blues continuum" appeared as the most, if not only, felicitous "vehicle" for *The Knot Garden*'s intervention into the racial environment of postcolonial Britain.

[105] Schuttenhelm, *Selected Letters*, 388.
[106] Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues*, 274.
[107] Tippett, "Dov's Journey," in *Music of the Angels* (London: Eulenberg Books, 1980), 236–38; 236.
[108] Genevieve Abravanel, *Americanizing Britain: The Rise of Modernism in the Age of the Entertainment Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 29.

The blues aesthetic saturates *The Knot Garden*.[109] Tippett's debt to the genre is most evident in the opera's disjunct segments of blues music pastiche, as well as stylistic allusions to African American popular music across Baraka's "blues continuum." Alongside an appropriation of the sound of blues music, the opera's focus on the intimate lives and individual psychology of its characters reflects the "private and personal… quality" that Baraka suggests is distinctive of blues, while its admixture of violence and eroticism elaborates on Mellers' heady description of blues, boogie-woogie and ragtime as "orgy and alienation."[110] In addition, *The Knot Garden* adapts claims in Mellers' and Baraka's work of blues music's capacity to represent black people's experiences and powerfully challenge notions of white superiority. Tippett thus delegates the duty of black representation to a blues aesthetic derived in large part from texts by Mellers and Baraka. Finally, *The Knot Garden* responds to practices of improvisation that Baraka argues are "of invaluable significance" to several forms of African American popular music. While Tippett's meticulously detailed score nowhere calls for singers or musicians to improvise in performance, the opera gives the illusion of improvisation by staging a seemingly unplanned sequence of scenes, in which characters comment self-reflexively on the action. As such, blues music offers a basis for examining the opera's ambient poetics of race and its vehement theatricality.

The music of the "blues continuum" frames Mel and Dov's first entrance in Act One. Their sudden appearance in the "house-garden" is prepared in part by Flora's "racist" nursery rhyme (rehearsal number 85). Here, Tippett distances his own authorial voice from that of Flora,

[109] Several critics have noted the presence of blues in *The Knot Garden*, although not with sufficient detail. See Kemp, *Tippett*; and D. W. Wakeling, "The Knot Garden," *Opera Quarterly* 3, no. 4 (1985): 92–94.
[110] Mellers, *Music in a New Found Land*, 262.

whose diegetic song is interspersed with wordless vocalizations, set syllabically to seemingly random intervallic leaps, and almost completely unaccompanied by instrumental music. Interrupting Flora's nursery rhyme, Mel seems to literalize the subject of its "unthinking" racism (Scene 9). Seemingly larger than life, Mel appears "in fancy-dress… as Caliban," and "swims on [stage]," quoting from Lewis Carroll's famous fantasy of inversions, *Alice in Wonderland*. Mel and Dov recite a confusing story of their origins in *The Tempest*.

Mel and Dov's spectacular entrance is marked by a raucous block of stylized jump blues or R&B of the kind that was quickly becoming emblematic of black and urban America.[111] It duly features the distinctive timbres of a drum kit and electric guitar, as well as the fast tempo of R&B. This block of music alternates between the chords of C7 and G7, marked in the bass by piano and pizzicato lower strings. Above this snippet of a blues chord progression, a cacophonous array of other instrumental lines (clarinet, piccolo, trombones and others) alludes to the improvised licks of a jump blues horn section. While it does not include any vocal music, Tippett's R&B-like music otherwise corresponds closely to Baraka's description in *Blues People* of the genre in late 1940s and 1950s America: "Rhythm & blues singers," he writes, "literally had to shout… above the changing and churning rhythm sections... [T]he louder the instrumental accompaniment… the more expressive the music was." For Baraka, R&B at this time represented a rare and valuable example of a musical genre that was highly popular among metropolitan African Americans without having fallen entirely under the control of the (white-owned) entertainment industry: it "was still... performed almost exclusively for… a Negro audience." As such, he suggests, R&B did "not suffer the ultimate sterility… of total immersion

[111] Robinson, "The Pattern from the Palimpsest."

in the mainstream of American culture." Baraka's description would likely have appealed to Tippett's desire to locate source materials for the authentic music of contemporary black America, but by the time he began to compose the opera in 1966 the popular music landscape had shifted immensely. For one, R&B was now thoroughly embedded in white America.[112] Nevertheless, Tippett's "reality fragment" of black popular music in this scene becomes the occasion to thrust an exuberant form of blackness into the "sterility" of the house-garden; in this sense, it was certainly unlike any opera that had ever been premiered on the Covent Garden stage.

Flora's shocked reaction to Mel's arrival seems to both echo and rebuke a particular concern in postwar Britain with sounds and cultural practices of postcolonial black music. In the 1950s and 1960s, newspaper reports in Britain conveyed concern over the "loud music" purportedly played in urban residential streets by young black men.[113] White, working-class residents of the British inner-city and their self-appointed spokespeople in the tabloid press attested to the threat posed by the music of their "new" black neighbors, frequently invoking the "quiet street" as an emblem of Britishness under threat. While some accounts misidentified the amplified sounds of Jamaican calypso and early ska records as the "American" popular music of the increasingly global entertainment industry, the case was made that Britain's postcolonial black population were causing sonic disruption to British cities. Mel and Dov's "entrance music" features neither the kind of vocal harmonies typical of commercial calypso music nor ska's distinctive off-beat accents, but nevertheless alludes powerfully to the kinds of concerns over

[112] See Brian Ward, *Just My Soul Responding: Rhythm and Blues, Black Consciousness, and Race Relations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).
[113] See Webster, *Englishness and Empire*, 149.

"loud" black music in British inner-cities. Tippett's task here, however, is to imagine this music as the setting for something other than racial antipathy, modeling alternative forms of interracial encounter in postcolonial Britain to those characterized by increasing resentment.

When Mel enters on Flora's unwitting cue, his appearance threatens to expose the history of racialized violence that her song both draws on and disavows. By interrupting Flora's distracted singing, he also violently disturbs the seeming tranquility of the house-garden. Lisa Lowe refers to such spaces as forms of "bourgeois intimacy" that are embedded within colonial power relations, noting that the "slave and indentured labor in the colonies founded the formative wealth of the European bourgeoisie and… the material comforts of the bourgeois home."[114] While it takes place at the expense of Flora's naïveté, this scene serves to expose the material conditions of race upon which the "bourgeois intimacy" of the private garden may ultimately depend. Rather than the purported cause of urban noise pollution, black masculinity and the black music of the "blues continuum" dramatize the liberal-antiracist attempt to disrupt white prejudice and intolerance and replace such attitudes with a liberal disposition. Here, Tippett becomes the purveyor of black music for his white audience, prioritizing conventions of racial performance that would seem to challenge the racial and sexual boundaries of white, middle-class social norms. Surprising Flora with the "literal" implications of her song, Mel's arrival thus renews Tippett's authority as stakeholder in a set of liberal-antiracist values that recentered the agency and consciousness of the British white liberal and identified the task of social transformation as primarily one of educating other white Britons on race matters.

[114] See Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015). Also see Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 3.

The finale of Act One intensifies this claim on behalf of the capacity of blues music to equip white characters in the opera with the capacity for more harmonious forms of interracial encounter. The first time in the opera that all seven singers appear on stage, this septet ensemble alternates sections of slow 12-bar blues music ("Tempo di blues") with fast-paced boogie-woogie or barrelhouse blues (Scene 13, rehearsal number. 180). Again, Tippett makes great use of characteristic instrumental timbres and styles: the slow blues sections feature muted trumpet, double-bass, piano, electric guitar and snare drum with brush sticks (rehearsal number 181), while the up-tempo sections are driven by the leaping octaves of a boogie-woogie bass-line in the piano (rehearsal number 189). The seven vocal lines and all but the very low register instrumental lines retain a largely atonal harmonic language. Single instrumental lines interject with improvisatory riffs, while the vocal lines pile up a heterogeneous and proliferating texture, flowing mellifluously with seemingly ambiguous rhythms above the chord progression. As the singers seem to riff on one another's musical and lyrical phrases, even sometimes aligning with each other at the section breaks between 12-bar blues and boogie-woogie, the integrity of the ensemble sounds provisional, improvised, and dangerously insecure, fleshing out the kind of "heterophonic homophony" that Mellers suggests is the prerogative of blues performance. In addition, as the final 12-bar blues section of the septet progresses, Tippett demands that each voice part strain into the highest register of the vocal range, underlining this precarity in the vocal timbres. The sonic effect is thus of seven atomized and individually distinct vocal lines that are thrown together uneasily and intimately within the larger, intricate matrix of the blues framework.

As Kemp suggests, in the slow blues sections of the septet, "Tippett keeps strictly to the given structure [twelve-bar blues] and its chord sequence."[115] Indeed, the first slow blues section (rehearsal number 180 to 189) is broadly structured as three statements of a twelve-bar blues progression, which is marked in the bass by contra-bassoon, double-bass and piano. In each twelve-measure progression, the first measure begins with E in the bass, before moving to A as part of an A major harmony (IV of E) in the fifth measure. The seventh measure of a 12-bar blues progression would typically return to the tonic, but Tippett's chromatic music here does not do so. In the ninth measure, the bass moves to B, harmonized as B major (V of E). Finally, the eleventh measure returns to E (I). Gloag suggests that Tippett's chord progression here does not follow what he calls the 12-bar blues "archetype" because the tenth measure does not move to IV "as the form usually requires."[116] Certainly, Tippett's richly chromatic harmonization of the bassline and use of fragmented instrumental textures cloak the blues progression in an array of surface details, while Tippett's substitution of atonal harmonies for the typical return to the tonic in the seventh measure of each 12-bar blues statement deviates from any standard blues progression. Yet a version of the blues progression without the harmonic move to chord IV in the tenth measure has been entirely standard in blues performance for around 100 years.[117] In any case, it was this version of the 12-bar blues progression—without a change from chord V to IV in the tenth measure—that Tippett would have seen in Jelly Roll Morton's "Mamie's Blues" in the appendix of Mellers' *Music in a New Found Land*, which Tippett referred to as a "fine example of a blues lyric." Not significantly different in this respect from the harmonic model

[115] Kemp, *Tippett, the Composer and His Music* (London: Eulenberg Books, 1980), 418.
[116] Gloag, "Tippett's Operatic World," 253.
[117] See Alfons Dauer, "Towards a Typology of the Vocal Blues Idiom," *Jazzforschung/Jazz Research* 11 (1979): 9–92.

provided by Mellers, Tippett's 12-bar blues sections of the Act One septet employ this blues progression as a steady and expansive framework, which provides the basis for a fleeting form of intimacy between the opera's seven very different characters.

The blues aesthetic in *The Knot Garden* serves pedagogically as the setting to model the kind of racially mixed public sphere that Tippett, like many other white liberals, hoped would prosper in postcolonial Britain. Considered as an example of the cultural production of race relations discourse, *The Knot Garden*, in its staging of interracial intimacy and desire, not only sought to tackle racism in everyday actions and feelings, but also extended the agenda of many liberal-antiracist projects in postcolonial Britain by focusing on sex itself. In the 1950s and 1960s, writers and researchers on race relations in Britain went to great lengths to provide data on encounter in the public sphere, such as in schools, the workplace and public transportation, but they rarely studied or tackled what many admitted were widespread fears about interracial sex and miscegenation.[118] As one British liberal reformer noted in 1965, while "[t]here is nothing contrary to Nature in the mixing of different types or races within each species," "[t]he very idea of actual intimate physical contact with a coloured person is repugnant to most white people."[119] While liberal-antiracist prerogatives in postwar Britain sometimes identified interracial sex as the ultimate goal of social reforms, it was this type of intimacy that seemed most difficult to encourage on a national scale. Interracial sex remained a stumbling block for an antiracist political project that insisted that "[n]othing is so conducive to social change as the contact between different cultures."[120] In contrast to *The Knot Garden*, most race relations discourse in

[118] See Webster, *Englishness and Empire*, 79.
[119] Clifford S. Hill, *How Colour Prejudiced Is Britain?* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1965).
[120] Richmond, *The Colour Problem*, 24.

1960s Britain chose to leave its theory of interracial encounter at the door of the private home or bedroom.

By locating blackness in blues music, however, Tippett also places severe limits on the forms of racial knowledge that the opera can impart. Despite their scope, both Mellers' and Baraka's studies of blues music are constitutive of a culture of postwar blues revival that greatly privileged qualities of masculinity, transnational mobility and individual autonomy. As a cultural practice, postwar blues revival enacted circuits of transatlantic exchange and animated a discourse on race and mobility, even while its terms of reference quickly became limited to the individual male blues performer and fan. During the 1950s and 1960s, British white liberals, students and the heady generation of teenagers born after the war took eagerly to blues. For them, it was a novel style of music couched in a resistant culture of transatlantic exchange, at first via recorded music, and then as extensive tours of African American blues performers, including Josh White, Big Bill Broonzy, Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf.[121] As Ann DuCille suggests, female blues singers tended much less often to adopt the "freewheeling sexuality" of their male counterparts.[122] Particularly gendered material and social restraints, as Angela Davis writes, meant that "the affirmation of autonomous sexuality by women [blues performers] was characterized by a complexity that was not present in men's blues."[123] Thus when the culture of blues revival prized the seemingly unencumbered sexuality of male blues performance, it almost entirely ignored female blues performers. Emphasizing qualities of mobility and boundlessness,

[121] Neil A. Wynn, "'Why I Sing the Blues': African American Culture in a Transatlantic World," in *Cross the Water Blues: African American Music in Europe*, ed. Neil A. Wynn (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2007), 8.
[122] Ann DuCille, *The Coupling Convention: Sex, Text, and Tradition in Black Women's Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 70–71.
[123] Angela Y. Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999).

the culture of postwar blues revival in Britain constructed blues music as a valuable and undervalued repository of African American hyper-masculinity, individual autonomy and principled resistance to racism. Reproducing this privileged itinerary for black masculinity, *The Knot Garden* leaves utterly erased the structural aspects of racism in postcolonial Britain, even while spectacularly (and thematically) introducing blues music and black queerness into the civic and institutional space of the British national opera house.

CHAPTER TWO

MUSIC AND SURVEILLANCE: STAGING LIBERAL MULTICULTURALISM IN THATCHERITE BRITAIN

UK School Report (1983, acrylic and crayon on canvas), a work by the black British artist Tam Joseph, depicts a triptych formed by three portraits of adolescent black men.[1] Painted with the stark black lines of comic-book illustrations, the three men's almost identical facial outlines satirize the exaggerated features of racist caricature, in which blackness seems to emanate from a distended anatomy, especially the nose and lips. Color fields of red, white, and blue—the *tricolor* emblem of Western-imperialist nationalism and specifically the modern British nation-state—fill the background of the left, center, and right portraits respectively. Against the surroundings of European modernity, Joseph's triptych suggests, black masculinity appears uneasily in the foreground as exceptional specimen.

Emphasizing these connotations of anthropological illustration, each of the three portraits that compose *UK School Report* is labeled with a perfunctory epithet that implies the broad-brush language of the "school report" referenced in the work's title. Rendered in a stilted cursive script that alerts the viewer to the institutional location of the "school report," we read that the young man in the first portrait "[is] good at sports," the second "likes music," and the third "needs surveillance." These categories of black masculinity seem to correspond with the dress and hairstyles of the men in the three portraits. The young man who "[is] good at sports" wears short-cropped, brushed hair and a collared shirt and necktie; he conforms to the uniform of a

[1] See Eddie Chambers, *Black Artists in British Art: A History since the 1950s* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014); and "The Only Thing to Look Forward to...Is the Past," *Cross / Cultures* 144 (2012): 1–50.

British state-funded high school. The young man who "likes music" wears casual clothing, earrings, and trendy medium-length hair; his style bespeaks the ongoing conversion of economic to cultural capital and emulates black male superstars of the global music industry in the early 1980s, such as Prince and Michael Jackson. Finally, the young man who "needs surveillance" wears long dreadlocks that partially cover his face. His is a style that symbolizes the "Rastafarian culture" that an official discourse of law and order in 1980s Britain would associate with black pathology and criminality.[2] Whereas the man who "likes music" appears to curate his own cultural constitution (selecting particular "music" from the marketplace and donning the impermanent stylistic cues of earrings and a modish hairstyle), the man who "needs surveillance" seems to be covered or trapped by a "Rastafarian" culture that hampers his movement and communication and demands state intervention.

UK School Report discloses how a disciplinary division of black masculinity had come to occupy the foreground of the official British imagination in the 1980s.[3] As blackness in Joseph's painting begins to occlude the state's more conventional emblems of red, white and blue, black masculinity occupies at least three different official categories; it appears as either (1) the surplus labor of purported physical prowess in the officially sanctioned arena of athletics, (2) a commendable consumption of music within the bounds of the global marketplace of cultural commodities, or (3) a propensity toward violence and criminality that supposedly demands an urgent response from the state. In this way, Joseph's work reveals how the Thatcherite British state created taxonomies of black masculinity that worked to create, identify, arrest, and

[2] Paul Gilroy, *"There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack": The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), esp. 72–113. Also see Mark Anthony Neal, *Looking for Leroy: Illegible Black Masculinities* (New York: New York University Press, 2013).
[3] On the "disciplinary division" of blackness in postcolonial Britain, see Anna Marie Smith, *New Right Discourse on Race and Sexuality: Britain, 1968–1990* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 123–24.

quarantine subjects of "acceptable" and "unacceptable" blackness. This official taxonomy of blackness separates young black men deemed suitable for inclusion within the social order from black "criminal elements." Thus, *UK School Report* documents how a British official discourse operates a differentiated citizenship that subjects populations to different treatments according to their usefulness within a Thatcherite political economy: those whose labor or cultural consumption contributes toward neoliberal accumulation are tolerated, whereas those who remain bound by a "pathological" culture of delinquency are subjected to state practices of surveillance and criminalization.[4]

While the similarity between the three faces in *UK School Report* implies that all these official categories of blackness share the stain of racist caricature, it also asks us to consider that the three portraits may in fact be of the same person. If so, the presumptively watertight categories of "sport[y]," "music[al]," and criminal blackness are labels that can all adhere to one body. If state surveillance and criminalization of "unacceptable" blackness form the counterpart to state policies that can commend an "acceptable" blackness that "likes music" or "[is] good at sports," *UK School Report* intimates that the British state's preoccupation with constructing a disciplinary differentiation of black masculinity could never work so neatly in practice. While the same young man may move between any of the state's categories of "acceptable" and "unacceptable" blackness, at all times he stares out from his red, white or blue box with the

[4] On "differentiated citizenship," see Aihwa Ong, "On the Edge of Empires: Flexible Citizenship among Chinese in Diaspora," *positions* 1, no. 3 (Winter 1993): 745–78; and *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006). Also see Gilroy, *"There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack"*; and Errol Lawrence, "In the Abundance of Water the Fool is Thirsty: Sociology and Black 'Pathology,'" in *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain*, ed. Centre for Contemporary Culture Studies (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1982), 95–142.

reluctant, downcast expression of a criminal mug shot.[5] Caught by three different modalities of the state's cold embrace, if it is the same young black man who appears three times in *UK School Report*, Tam Joseph's work ensures that he has last laugh.

This chapter takes *UK School Report* as a point of departure from which to trace and assess the rise of state multiculturalism in 1980s Britain. Joseph's work documents a state rhetoric in 1980s Britain of "liking" racialized cultural production and racialized music in particular. It registers the British state's newfound capacity to authorize and encourage the consumption and enjoyment of nonwhite culture, even if the necessary labor of cultural consumption was delegated to individuals and was imagined as taking place strictly within the privatized realm of the consumer economy—as in the case of the young black man who reportedly "likes" (or does the liking of) "music" before such time that the state belatedly acknowledges and retrospectively officializes his "extra-curricular" interests. *UK School Report* also divulges how the state's endorsement of racialized culture formed but one component of a governmentality that also included the state surveillance and criminalization of British people of color, especially young black men.[6] While the rise of multiculturalism in 1980s Britain recalibrated official constructions of British national identity away from homogeneity and toward notions of cultural diversity that represented racialized culture as national culture, this unprecedented diversification of the center was accompanied by policies and practices of

[5] In other words, he evinces the responsibility of inhabiting what Hortense Spillers has called the black "captive body" of an antiblack symbolic order. Hortense J. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," *Diacritics* 17, no. 2 (Summer 1987): 64–81. Moreover, as Simone Browne writes, "surveillance… is the fact of antiblackness." Simone Browne, *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 10.

[6] See John Solomos, *Black Youth, Racism and the State: The Politics of Ideology and Policy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991); and Stuart Hall, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke and Brian Roberts, *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order* (London: Macmillan, 1978).

containment and repression, including the impoverishment of nonwhite communities, the militarization of policing, and redoubled efforts to deport foreign-born British residents and citizens. This chapter asks how the rise of state multiculturalism in 1980s Britain dissimulated racialized economic inequality and racialized state violence.

In the first part of this chapter, I explain how British governmentality in the Thatcher era responded to the race-radical insurgencies of the 1970s (see Chapter 4) by adopting avowedly multicultural policies and rhetoric that brought to distraction the Thatcherite state's post-Keynesian divestment of responsibility for redressing material inequality. As I argue in this section, in 1980s Britain the rush toward what I refer to here as *liberal multiculturalism* acted in harmony with racial abandonment, including the abandonment of British communities of color to "internal colonies" in urban centers and to colonial-style approaches to policing.[7] Far from discarding antiracism entirely, Thatcherism reduced a politics of antiracist social transformation to what Paul Gilroy has referred to as the "personal quest" of demonstrating a desire for diversity.[8] The individual consumption of racialized culture, such as the act of "lik[ing] music," cohered well with Thatcherism's emphasis on entrepreneurship and privatized interests, and thereby furthered rather than antagonized racial capitalism. Since the 1990s, and especially after Thatcher's death in 2013, the U.K. governments of the 1980s have often been mischaracterized as clinging to an image of Britain as a white Christian nation, obscuring the decisive role played

[7] On the "internal colonies" of postcolonial Britain, see Stuart Hall, "Racism and Reaction," in *Five Views of Multi-Racial Britain: Talks on Race Relations Broadcast by BBC TV*, ed. David Lane (London: Commission for Racial Equality, 1978), 23–35; 30.
[8] Gilroy, *"There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack"*, 146.

by liberal multiculturalism in securing Thatcherite neoliberal restructuring as a "commonsense" approach to social and economic policy.[9]

Next, I turn specifically to British cultural policy during the 1980s, in particular the policies of the (government-funded) Arts Council of Great Britain during a contentious period of Council's postwar history that Chin-Tao Wu has described as characterized by the process of "Thatcherising the Arts Council."[10] I discuss how the Arts Council read Naseem Khan's landmark study of nonwhite cultural production in Britain *The Arts Britain Ignores*.[11] While *The Arts Britain Ignores* stemmed from the mid 1970s, Khan's study became the blueprint for the Arts Council's official policies of multiculturalism only later in the 1980s, when official concerns about rising "unrest" and "disorder" among inner-city black populations expedited the Arts Council's efforts to better serve nonwhite artists and audiences, as well as state practices of surveillance and criminalization of British communities of color. The Arts Council's multicultural policies and rhetoric in the 1980s reproduced processes of racialization that they claimed to redress. I illustrate how a discourse of multiculturalism could represent an opera performance as an achievement of racial justice, even while changes to cultural policies in 1980s Britain enacted only minimal redistribution of resources toward people of color.

In the third and final part of this chapter, I read *A Night at the Chinese Opera* by the British composer Judith Weir, as both an active proponent and a witty provocation of British liberal-multicultural discourse. First performed by Kent Opera in 1987 and broadcast on national television in Britain in 1988, *A Night at the Chinese Opera* was widely praised for the

---

[9] On Thatcherism as "the remaking of common sense," see Stuart Hall, *The Hard Road to Renewal: Thatcherism and the Crisis of the Left* (London: Verso, 1988), 8.
[10] Chin-Tao Wu, *Privatising Culture: Corporate Art Intervention since the 1980s* (London: Verso, 2002).
[11] Naseem Khan, *The Arts Britain Ignores: The Arts of Ethnic Minorities in Britain* (London: Commission for Racial Equality, 1976).

imaginative ways in which it draws on European and Chinese conventions of music-drama.[12] While it uses exclusively "Western" operatic voices and orchestral instruments, *A Night at the Chinese Opera* is based largely on a modern English translation of *The Orphan of Zhao*, a classical Chinese drama from the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Yuan dynasty era. Weir's opera is set in the Yuan dynasty in "a provincial city on the north-west borders of late thirteenth-century China," and its action takes place against the backdrop of both the military occupation of China under the Mongolian leader Kublai Khan and the arrival in the Far East of the Italian merchant and explorer Marco Polo. A stylized performance of *The Orphan of Zhao* makes up roughly the middle third of Weir's opera as a "play within the play."

The drama of *A Night at the Chinese Opera* revolves around the relationship between this extensive diegetic performance of *The Orphan of Zhao* (the play within the play) and the events portrayed in the opera's diegesis itself—in the Yuan-dynasty era "provincial city." In this section of the chapter, I discuss how Weir's opera represents Chinese and European musical-dramatic traditions via a multicultural lexicon of familiarity and respect for ethnically distinct cultures, and how Weir's program note and televised talk about the work encouraged the audience for Kent Opera's production to undertake a quintessentially multicultural "personal quest" for greater knowledge and appreciation of Chinese culture. Yet, as I argue, from the comfortably safe distance of "late thirteenth-century China" *A Night at the Chinese Opera* also cleverly satirizes the earnest bureaucratic confidence with which state multiculturalism in 1980s Britain attempted to press cultural performance—and opera, in particular—into the service of abstract government goals of cultural diversity and social cohesion. Taking cues from Marx Brothers'

[12] Robert Hartford, "Opera in Britain Today," *Musical Times* 131, no. 1771 (September 1990): 464–74.

famous send-up of European high culture in the 1936 Hollywood film *A Night at the Opera*, Weir's *A Night at the Chinese Opera* offers a subtle corrective to liberal-multicultural discourse by questioning the role of opera in securing official prerogatives of national identity.

Thatcher's Promotion of Multiculturalism

> In effect, "ethnic" arts policies were the translation of colonial policy to the metropolis. The "natives" of Jamaica or India became the "ethnics" of Britain, and funding bodies saw it as their duty to help them preserve their cultural identities: this was strikingly similar to what was close to the heart of colonial officials responsible for "native affairs."
>
> If there was any change… between the colonial and post-colonial periods, it was the new atmosphere of liberal benevolence… It produced a reassuring symbolism which saw no problem… in the existence of institutionalised racism.
>
> —Kwesi Owusu, *The Struggle for Black Arts in Britain: What Can We Consider Better than Freedom* (1986)

In a series of writings published in 1986, the Ghanaian-born British artist Kwesi Owusu maintained that the Thatcher government's new multicultural policies in Britain were "nothing but a con trick."[13] Owusu noted the cold facts: the introduction of multicultural initiatives in the 1980s coincided with conditions that for Owusu and others constituted a new empire within Britain.[14] These conditions included racial segregation, impoverishment of nonwhite communities, mass incarceration of young people of color, and deportation of immigrants.[15]

---

[13] Kwesi Owusu, *The Struggle for Black Arts in Britain: What Can We Consider Better Than Freedom* (London: Comedia, 1986), 29.

[14] See Owusu, *The Struggle for Black Arts in Britain*, 28–29. Also see Salman Rushdie, "The New Empire within Britain," *New Society* 62, no. 1027 (1982): 129–38; and Paul Gilroy, "Police and Thieves," in *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain*, ed. Centre for Contemporary Culture Studies (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1982), 143–82.

[15] See Ana Aliverti, *Crimes of Mobility: Criminal Law and the Regulation of Immigration* (London: Routledge, 2013); Imogen Tyler, "Designed to Fail: A Biopolitics of British Citizenship," *Citizenship Studies* 14, no. 1 (February 2010): 61–74; Ali Rattansi, "On Being and Not Being Brown/Black-British: Racism, Class, Sexuality and Ethnicity in Post-Imperial Britain," *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 2, no. 1 (2000): 118–34; Karen St-Jean Kufour, "Black Britain's Economic Power, Myth or Reality? An Empirical Review and Analysis of the Economic Reality of Black Britain," in *Black British Culture and Society: A Text Reader*, ed. Kwesi

Owusu explained that "the space reserved for 'ethnic' arts in the backwaters of mainstream British culture" allowed colonial rule to be transplanted to the metropolitan center of modern Britain. Government support for "ethnic minority arts," he contended, "reinforced the isolation of immigrant communities" and "encourage[d] ghettoisation." Multiculturalism in 1980s Britain functioned as "an effective screen… hiding the imperial prerogatives and economic agendas at the heart of racial exclusion." It deployed diversionary tactics, such as "'let's all get merry' community festivals," which made it possible to ignore the innumerable "decaying and neglected council estates [social housing projects] of the inner city" in which many black Britons lived.[16]

Owusu's writing may be understood as part of an archive of radical antiracist critique that understood British official multiculturalism of the 1980s as a strategy used to divest state responsibilities for redressing material inequality.[17] In the name of national recovery from the economic downturn of the 1970s, the Thatcher governments of the 1980s renounced Keynesian ideals of social democracy and ushered in a revised set of social and economic priorities, linked by the stated aim of "liberating" accumulation and often identified since as both expressive and formative of neoliberalism. This amounted to an extensive regulatory system that mandated the privatization of public resources, the elimination of social solidarities that interfered with accumulation (such as trade unions and municipal socialism, as well as radical movements for

---

Owusu (London: Routledge, 1999), 352–60; Hall, *The Hard Road to Renewal*; and S. J. Smith, "Political Interpretations of 'Racial Segregation' in Britain," *Environment and Planning D: Society & Space* 6 (December 1988): 423–44.

[16] Owusu, *The Struggle for Black Arts in Britain*, 29; 51; 44; 73; 43.

[17] This would include Rasheed Araeen, "Come On, Cheer Up!" [1982], in *Storms of the Heart: An Anthology of Black Arts and Culture*, ed. Kwesi Owusu (London: Camden Press, 1988), 119–29; Rasheed Araeen, "From Primitivism to Ethnic Arts," *Third Text* 1, no. 1 (1987): 6–25; Owusu, *The Struggle for Black Arts in Britain*; Beverly Byran, Stella Dadzie and Suzanne Scafe, *The Heart of the Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain* (London: Virago, 1985); and Institute of Race Relations, "Anti-Racist not Multicultural Education," *Race and Class* 22, no. 1 (1980): 81–83. Also see Tracy Fisher, *What's Left of Blackness: Feminisms, Transracial Solidarities, and the Politics of Belonging in Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); and Tariq Modood, "Establishment, Multiculturalism and British Citizenship," *Political Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (January–March 1994): 53–74.

material and racial justice formed by coalitions among poor and nonwhite communities), and increasing emphases on global economic management.[18] While it was not particularly effective in revitalizing the national economy, the "Thatcher revolution" was highly productive of increased inequalities.[19] Chief among these were the hyper-extraction of value from racialized bodies and the abandonment of impoverished urban communities, especially those with high concentrations of postcolonial black populations.[20]

Multiculturalism would emerge in the 1980s as an official strategy of giving coherence to Thatcherism's racialized prerogatives of accumulation and impoverishment. While liberal multicultural ideology became increasingly useful during a time of welfare demolition and purported "racial crisis," Thatcherism's capacity to deploy liberal multiculturalism nevertheless relied on earlier ventures in the postwar period to suture antiracist values to British national identity. In the 1950s and 1960s, a liberal discourse of "race relations" had risen to dominance in legislative, academic and cultural domains. It had aimed to manage racial antipathy—or what it called "prejudice"—by reducing postcolonial black immigration and increasing the knowledge base and legal powers of the welfare state to restrict the range of acceptable racial meanings in everyday British life (see Chapter 1). British official multiculturalism of the 1980s revised postwar state commitments to securing public order against the perceived threat of interracial violence by making such commitments compatible with post-Keynesian downsizing of state responsibilities. In contrast to the liberal ideology of British race relations discourse,

---

[18] David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
[19] Stuart Hall and others employ the term "Thatcher revolution." See Hall, *The Hard Road to Renewal*. On the limited success of neoliberalism for economic growth in Britain, see George Irvin, "Inequality and Recession in Britain and the USA," *Development and Change* 42, no. 1 (January 2011): 154–82; and Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*.
[20] Andrew Friend and Andy Metcalf, *Slump City: The Politics of Mass Unemployment* (London: Pluto Press, 1981). Also see Ambalavaner Sivanandan, *A Different Hunger: Writings on Black Resistance* (London: Pluto Press, 1982).

multiculturalism ceded theories of a natural hostility between white Britons and nonwhite "immigrants" to new conceptions of the national community as racially mixed and ostensibly inclusive of nonwhite populations, while also providing justifications for racialized inequality and the militarized policing of black communities. Finally, multiculturalism could be presented as a compelling response to the British "racial crisis" of the 1970s and early 1980s, which had highlighted the limited power of existing race relations legislation to arbitrate and curtail racial antagonism.

What is often forgotten are the ways in which Thatcherism engaged in a widespread effort of "diversity management" alongside structural policies of racial abandonment.[21] Despite the fact that several conservative politicians and public commentators in the 1980s actively waged what Anna Marie Smith refers to as a "right-wing anti-multiculturalism campaign," the Thatcher governments promoted liberal-multicultural discourse as a new and official form of antiracism for 1980s Britain.[22] During this period, British official multiculturalism encompassed cultural policies, including arts funding, education, judicial systems, and even traffic laws.[23] Ironically, the rising prominence of multicultural policies in Britain during the 1980s stemmed from the same set of assumptions that consented to severe and entrenched racialized economic inequality, viewing it as the outcome of fair competition.[24] While multicultural discourse established the idea of Britain as an inclusive and multiracial national community, it also

[21] See Paul Gilroy, "1981 and 2011: From Social Democratic to Neoliberal Rioting," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 112, no. 3 (Summer 2013): 550–58.
[22] Smith, *New Right Discourse on Race and Sexuality*, 115. My subheading of this section references Smith's final chapter, "Thatcher's Promotion of Homosexuality." See *ibid*., 183–239.
[23] See David Feldman, "Why the English Like Turbans: Multicultural Politics in British History," *Structures and Transformations in Modern British History*, eds. David Feldman and Jon Lawrence (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 281–302.
[24] See Jodi Melamed, *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 30–31.

provided the terms to disavow the persistence of structural racism, for example by representing those Thatcherism dispossessed as handicapped by their own "monoculturalism," cultural "inflexibility," or "failure" of adequate cultural identification.[25] In this way, notions of black "pathology" and of the "criminal culture" of British communities of color could be leveraged as a rationalization for severe and entrenched racial inequalities. As it operated in tandem with racially differentiated citizenship, liberal multiculturalism portrayed Thatcherite restructuring as fair for all British citizens, while concealing the racial inequalities and antagonisms on which the Thatcher revolution depended.

Today, however, the global rise of multicultural discourse is often remembered rather differently: as a hard-won liberal victory of what became known as the "culture wars." In rancorous exchanges throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, liberal and conservative camps in the U.S., the U.K., Australia and several other post-industrial Western democracies proposed competing solutions to the problem of national identity in an age of unprecedented globalization. According to a depiction of the culture wars that is common today, the vision put forward by the conservative side represented a Western artistic tradition as the shared culture of the nation, while liberals re-imagined national identity as plural, diverse and inclusive of nonwhite and non-Western cultural representation. During this period, *multiculturalism* referenced an extensive debate across public, scholarly, legislative and other domains about what counted as knowledge

[25] Jodi Melamed, "The Spirit of Neoliberalism: From Racial Liberalism to Neoliberal Multiculturalism," *Social Text* 89, no. 4 (Winter 2006), 1–24; 1. In the British context, see Deirdre Conlon and Nick Gill, "Gagging Orders: Asylum Seekers and Paradoxes of Freedom and Protest in Liberal Society," *Citizenship Studies* 17, no. 2 (2013): 241–59; Suzanne Lenon, "Hidden Hegemonies of the Rainbow: The Racialised Scaffolding of Forced Marriage and Civil Partnership in the UK," *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 33, no. 3 (June 2012): 275–87; Tahir Abbas, *Islamic Radicalism and Multicultural Politics: The British Experience* (London: Routledge, 2011); Arun Kundnani, *The End of Tolerance: Racism in 21st Century Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 2007); Nira Yuval-Davis, Floya Anthias and Eleonore Kofman, "Secure Borders and Safe Haven and the Gendered Politics of Belonging: Beyond Social Cohesion," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28, no. 3 (2005): 513–35.

and legitimate democratic governance, leading to an extreme and seemingly intractable polarization between liberal and conservative opinion.[26] Yet, by the late 1990s, the multicultural debate had largely ended: as the political theorist Will Kymlicka declared in 1999, "multiculturalists… have won the day."[27] At the start of the twenty-first century, a language of multiculturalism became the dominant ethic of neoliberal accumulation, spanning government policies, university curricula, corporate business practices, and international law.[28] What has recently become clear, however, is that the multicultural debate (or "culture wars") of the 1980s and 1990s diverted attention from proliferating racial economic inequalities on both global and national scales.[29] While a conservative vilification of multicultural discourse amounted to a defense of white privilege, multiculturalism's emphases on tolerance and diversity were easily accommodated within the inequitable logics of neoliberal accumulation.

Within the British context specifically, the history of the multicultural debate has frequently been told according to this familiar narrative as a liberal victory. Many commentators have pointed to the early development of multiculturalism among British left-wing and antiracist grassroots movements in the 1970s, contrasting this activity with what they describe as the

---

[26] Joan W. Scott, "Multiculturalism and the Politics of Identity," *October*, 61 (1992): 12–19.
[27] Will Kymlicka, "An Update from the Multiculturalism Wars: Comments on Shacher and Sinner-Haley," in *Multicultural Questions*, eds. Christian Joppke and Steven Lukes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 112–32; 116.
[28] Melamed, "The Spirit of Neoliberalism." For a descriptions of multiculturalism as governmentality, see: Duncan Ivison, "Multiculturalism as a Public Ideal," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Multiculturalism* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 1–18; Sienho Lee and Jacques-Yvan Morin, *Multiculturalism and International Law: Essays in Honor of Edward McWhinney* (Leiden, Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2009); Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka, "Multiculturalism and the Welfare State: Setting the Context," in *Multiculturalism and the Welfare State*, eds. Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 1–48.
[29] See Sara Ahmed, *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality* (New York, Routledge, 2000); Wendy Brown, *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Melamed, *Represent and Destroy*; David Theo Goldberg, *The Threat of Race: Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009); and Slavoj Žižek, "Multiculturalism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Multinational Capital," *New Left Review* 225 (September 1997): 28–51.

conservative backlash against multicultural ideas toward the end of the decade.[30] To be sure, public ridicule of liberal-multicultural thinking became a staple part of government discourse when the U.K. Conservative Party came to power in 1979, especially during the period that Margaret Thatcher was prime minister from 1979 until 1990. As is often recalled, for example, Thatcher herself inveighed on several occasions against what she intended to portray as the absurd, left-wing invention of "anti-racist maths" [*sic*] and the introduction of the same to the curricula of British schools.[31] Yet, although she could red-bait her political opponents with more or less accurate examples of the left's multicultural initiatives, it was this kind of rhetorical posturing that concealed the decisive role played by multiculturalism in securing the Thatcherite agenda as a "commonsense" approach to social and economic policy.[32]

The occasion of Thatcher's death in 2013 prompted renewed criticisms of Thatcherism's legacy of racial thinking.[33] In some quarters, these criticisms amounted to new challenges to the structural violence of neoliberal, "Thatcherite" policies in twenty-first-century Britain, yet much public debate about Thatcher's legacy in recent years has not been able to relate hegemonic racial projects of the contemporary era to those ratified by Thatcher and the Thatcher governments in the 1980s.[34] For example, according to one writer in 2013, "[Thatcher] was, without doubt, a xenophobe [and] an unapologetic imperialist… [who] gained ground in a battle

[30] For example, see James Curran, Julian Petley and Ivor Gaber, eds., *Culture Wars: The Media and the British Left* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005).
[31] Quoted in Smith, *New Right Discourse on Race and Sexuality*, 218.
[32] On Thatcherism as "the remaking of common sense," see Hall, *The Hard Road to Renewal*, 8.
[33] Stephen Brooke, "Living in 'New Times': Historicizing 1980s Britain," *History Compass* 12, no. 1 (January 2014): 20–32.
[34] See Sheila Rowbotham, Lynne Segal, Hilary Wainwright and Pragna Patel, "After Thatcher: Still Trying to Piece It All Together," *Soundings: A Journal of Politics and Culture* 56 (Spring 2014): 143–57; and Peter McLaren, "Contemporary Youth Resistance Culture and the Class Struggle," *Critical Arts* 28, no. 1 (2014): 152–60. Also see Louisa Hadley, *Responding to Thatcher's Death* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

against cultural pluralism and anti-racism."[35] In fact, Thatcher was often keen to claim values of tolerance and diversity as seemingly uncontroversial principles of British national identity, asserting on one occasion that "people with other faiths and cultures have always been welcome in our land, assured of equality under the law."[36] In Thatcher's account of national history, Britain is always already multicultural in such a way that erases the active historical-material production of multicultural discourse, as well as (or including) its contestation in radical antiracist work and thinking such as that of Kwesi Owusu.[37] In descriptions of polarized liberal and conservative positions on multiculturalism, radical contributions to the multicultural debate in the 1980s that do not see Thatcherite imperialism as necessarily separate from Thatcherite multiculturalism risk becoming lost, thereby obscuring the ways in which liberal-multicultural antiracism worked to achieve a broad and renewed consensus for racial capitalism under Thatcherism's neoliberalizing project.

As multiculturalism became both the dominant and official discourse of antiracism in 1980s Britain, it cohered around efforts to contain the insurgencies of radical antiracisms, including the rise of "black British" race-radical organizing in the 1970s. In order to understand how this took place, it is important to reconstruct the ways in which antiracist values were in fact contested during the Thatcher era. Writing in 1987, Paul Gilroy referred to this as a contestation between "the two sides of antiracism."[38] As Gilroy argues, a radical antiracist "side" was consolidated in the 1970s partly in response to a new pattern of control and surveillance of black

---

[35] Jenny Bourne, "'May We Bring Harmony'? Thatcher's Legacy on 'Race'," *Race and Class* 55, no. 1 (July–September 2013): 87–91; 87. Emphasis added.
[36] Quoted in Smith, *New Right Discourse of Race and Sexuality*, 225.
[37] Anne-Marie Fortier analyzes a wide array of similar rhetoric in Britain. See Anne-Marie Fortier, "Pride Politics and Multiculturalist Citizenship," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28, no. 3 (May 2005): 559–78. Also see Timothy Brennan, "Black Theorists and Left Antagonists," *Minnesota Review* 37 (Fall 1991): 89–113.
[38] Gilroy, *'Ain't No Black in the Union Jack'*, 114–52.

Britons that accompanied a severe economic downturn in which people of color were most heavily charged with the responsibility for national dispossession.[39] As the Thatcher revolution began to redouble the state's divestment of responsibility for material inequalities in the name of national economic recovery, radical antiracisms targeted the structural conditions that created and maintained nonwhite populations of unemployed, incarcerated and deportable British citizens.[40] By contrast, the other "side" of antiracism in Britain did not seek to challenge processes of capital accumulation that relied on racialized super-exploitation and the maintenance of surplus populations. Consolidated in the early 1980s largely by local and national government authorities, an official antiracism—or what Gilroy calls "municipal antiracism"—limited its goals to cultivating the individual adult citizen's ability to refrain from displaying prejudiced behavior in public space and especially in the workplace. In this way, British official or "municipal" antiracism of the 1980s revised a liberal discourse of race relations for the new priorities of Thatcherite neoliberal restructuring. Far from discarding antiracism entirely, Thatcherism reduced a politics of antiracist social transformation to the "personal quest" of demonstrating a desire for diversity.[41] Thatcherite official antiracism ushered white Britons into new constituencies for a rhetoric of racial equality and allowed for identifications with antiracist values that, as consistent with practices of consumption, strengthened rather than undermined structural economic conditions of racialized dispossession.

Cultural policy was a particularly contested site for the production of both Thatcherite restructuring and the "municipal" antiracism of liberal multiculturalism. As the government body

---

[39] *Ibid*., 115.
[40] See Nisha Kapoor, "The Advancement of Racial Neoliberalism in Britain," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36, no. 6 (2013): 1028–1046.
[41] Gilroy, *'Ain't No Black in the Union Jack'*, 144; 146.

charged with allocating the majority of government subsidies to performing and visual arts, the Arts Council of Great Britain served as the focus during the 1980s for a series of contentions between competing itineraries for the provision of state services. Thatcher herself could claim in her 1993 memoirs that, during her time as Prime Minister, British state governance was "nowhere… more hotly disputed than in the world of the arts."[42] Indeed, the central role of cultural policy in ratifying liberal multiculturalism explains the otherwise baffling amount of national attention given to the Arts Council of Great Britain in the 1980s. On the one hand, the Arts Council was still charged, at least rhetorically, with the Keynesian ambition of providing "serious" culture to the widest number of British people. The Thatcher governments were often proud to defend this tradition of state subsidy, employing a liberal framework that identified culture as a benevolent and objective good.[43] Thus, the introduction of "multi-cultural" programs for the arts during the 1980s were often framed as an extension of the Keynesian mission into new priorities of pluralism and diversity that were designated as meeting antiracist goals of nonwhite inclusion. On the other hand, the practice of granting government funding to the arts, with its direct historical ties to the postwar British welfare state and to John Maynard Keynes himself, seemed increasingly inconsistent with Thatcher's goal of privatizing public resources and dismantling the Keynesian bargain. While Thatcher was not able to privatize the "arts sector" entirely, the Thatcher governments and their appointees accomplished a series of significant changes to British cultural policy in a process that Chin-Tao Wu has referred to as

[42] Quoted in D. Keith Peacock, *Thatcher's Theatre: British Theatre and Drama in the Eighties* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 35.
[43] On Keynes and the Arts Council, see Introduction. On the Thatcher governments' declarations of support for public culture, see Peacock, *Thatcher's Theatre,* 35; and Baz Kershaw, "Discouraging Democracy: British Theatres and Economics, 1979–1999," *Theatre Journal* 51, no. 3 (October 1999), 267–83. On the trope of "culture" within liberal societies, see Brown, *Regulating Aversion*, esp. 166–67.

"Thatcherising the Arts Council."[44] As a result of these changes, it was no longer possible to take for granted the annually increasing state subsidies for "the fine arts" that had characterized government spending in Britain since Keynes's founding of the Arts Council in 1946. Instead, government policies in the 1980s incorporated state-funded cultural production into the assault on forms of social solidarity that put restraint on capital accumulation.

The following section examines ways in which "Thatcherising" the Arts Council enforced practices of surveillance, accountability, self-reliance and market competitiveness upon the Council's client organizations, remaking public cultural institutions in the image of the neoliberal private corporation.[45] Every client organization that received grants-in-aid from the Arts Council could now be seen as a business failure (for its dependence upon public funding) rather than a public service (that would be maintained in the spirit of public ownership), setting in motion an official posture of suspicion and paternalism that could be applied to any arts organization funded by the Arts Council. I discuss how changes to cultural policy in 1980s Britain raised fundamental questions about the British state's relationship to postcolonial British populations and other British people of color, at a time when the post-Keynesian divestment of state responsibilities had become the *de facto* mandate of the Thatcher governments. As I will argue, during this period the Arts Council's policies and internal deliberations constituted a

[44] Wu, *Privatising Culture*, 65.
[45] See Wu, *Privatising Culture*. Also see Andrew Brighton, "Consumed by the Political: The Ruination of the Arts Council," *Critical Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 1–13; Kershaw, "Discouraging Democracy"; Oliver Bennett, "Cultural Policy in the United Kingdom: Collapsing Rationales and the End of a Tradition," *European Journal of Cultural Policy* 1, no. 2 (1995): 199–216; Andrew Sinclair, *Arts and Cultures: The History of the 50 Years of the Arts Council of Great Britain* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1995); Roy Shaw, "An Adjunct to the Advertising Business?" *The Political Quarterly* 61, no. 4 (October 1990): 375–80; and Anthony Beck, "The Impact of Thatcherism on the Arts Council," *Parliamentary Affairs* 42, no. 3 (1989): 362–79.

discourse of liberal multiculturalism that made it possible not to recognize the racial dimensions of Thatcherism's differentiated citizenship.

Securing Multiculturalism: National Culture and the Arts Council of Great Britain in the 1980s

The increasing prominence of black cultural activism in Britain during the 1970s formed the backdrop of the Arts Council's first significant attempt to consider British cultural policy in relation to issues of racial diversity.[46] As public bodies in Britain such as the Arts Council sought to respond to the redoubled insurgencies of race-radical organizing in the early 1980s, a key resource for these official "strategies of containment" would be Naseem Khan's extensive study of nonwhite cultural practice in Britain *The Arts Britain Ignores: The Arts of Ethnic Minorities in Britain*, published in 1976. Commissioned by the Arts Council in the early 1970s, Khan's study recounted her ethnographic fieldwork of over 500 cultural groups comprised of people of color, which she completed in 1974 and 1975 in towns and cities across the U.K., yet it was only in the 1980s that *The Arts Britain Ignores* would serve as the blueprint for extensive changes to British cultural policy.[47] Despite the few faltering steps that the Arts Council made toward crafting and implementing an avowedly multicultural approach to public arts funding in the late 1970s, Khan's study all but languished for almost a decade until a changed set of circumstances in the

[46] As the black British feminist Manthia Diawara has argued, the black British arts movement of the late 1960s and 1970s was followed in the Thatcher era of the 1980s by official or state "strategies of containment" that constituted both the "militarization of the the police against black youth in British cities and… the setting aside of [public] funds for minority artists. Manthia Diawara, "Power and Territory: The Emergence of Black British Film Collectives," in *Fires Were Started: British Cinema and Thatcherism*, ed. Lester Friedman (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 147–60; 148.

[47] Andrew Dewdney, David Dibosa, and Victoria Walsh, *Post Critical Museology: Theory and Practice in the Art Museum* (London: Routledge, 2013), 50.

Thatcher era compelled the official adoption of liberal multiculturalism. *The Arts Britain Ignores* is therefore a founding document of British official multiculturalism, but only insofar as it was re-read by policymakers and arts administrators in the 1980s. Kwesi Owusu's scathing attack on Khan's 1976 study in his trenchant commentary and manifesto *The Struggle for Black Arts in Britain* published ten years later in 1986 uses *The Arts Britain Ignores* as a proxy for Thatcherite multiculturalism without fully acknowledging the processes of re-reading and adaptation by which the Arts Council would belatedly interpret Khan's work.

At the time of its publication in 1976, the Arts Council treated Khan's *The Arts Britain Ignores* to only a muted discussion of the report's findings and recommendations. For example, as the archival records of the Arts Council's deliberations attest, one member of the Council suggested at the Council's 244th Monthly Meeting on May 26, 1976, that the public grants-in-aid should only be provided to "the professional arts," noting by contrast that "most of the ethnic groups appeared to be amateur."[48] One reason for this is that government grants had consistently been denied to nonwhite cultural organizations since the Arts Council's inception in 1946, even though the minutes of the Council's discussions do not mention this rather obvious explanation for any amateurism on the part of nonwhite artists. Dissuaded by the idea of implementing Khan's recommendations for granting public funds to artists of color, another member claimed that it was "doubtful whether it was true that the second generation [of British people of color] as a whole remained concerned with the ethnic culture," even while making no proposals for cultural policies aimed at young people of color. It was for this reason, however, that a third member, the literary and cultural studies scholar Richard Hoggarth, suggested that "ethnic

[48] Archives of the Arts Council of Great Britain (hereafter, AACGB) 36/6.

minorities had a right to have their culture protected" and that "the Council should support ethnic arts where standards were sufficiently high."[49] While the Council discussed *The Arts Britain Ignores* at some length in 1976, its members failed to reach a conclusion about how to translate Khan's ideas into concrete cultural policy. For many of the Council's members, Hoggarth's notion of a "right" to culture seemed all too abstract for a context in which British people of color seemed to appear to them to be sufficiently contented.

This assessment was to change drastically in the early 1980s; as reports of violent black "riots" in British inner-cities commanded the news headlines in 1981 and again in 1985, the Arts Council swiftly returned to issues of racial equality and did so within a framework not of abstract cultural "rights" but of quelling civic unrest.[50] The focus of this unrest in 1981 and 1985 was in Brixton and Tottenham, London districts with relatively large populations of people of color.[51] The first major events began in Brixton in 1981, as black Britons voiced collective dissent from recent incidents of police brutality. In particular, communities of color directed public anger against a new Metropolitan Police initiative (Operation Swamp 81) that revived legislation dating back to the early nineteenth-century that granted police indiscriminate powers of "stop and search." Concentrated almost entirely on Brixton, the operation saw plainclothes police officers detain and often arrest hundreds of people of color under these so-called "sus laws," or laws of presumed suspicion. As an editorial in the journal *Race & Class* maintained at the time,

---

[49] AACGB 36/6.
[50] On the "riots" in Britain in 1981, 1985 and 1986, see Nicole M. Jackson, "Imperial Suspect: Policing Colonies within 'Post'-Imperial England," *Callaloo* 39, no. 1 (Winter 2016): 203–15; Nicole M. Jackson, "'A Nigger in the New England': 'Sus,' the Brixton riot, and Citizenship," *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal* 8, no. 2 (2015): 158–70; Tracy Fisher, "Rac(e)ing the Nation: Black Politics and the Thatcherite Backlash," in *What's Left of Blackness*, 93–122; Tyler, "Designed to Fail"; and, John Benyon and John Solomos, "The Simmering Cities: Urban Unrest during the Thatcher Years," *Parliamentary Affairs* 41, no. 3 (1988): 402–22.
[51] Tyler, "Designed to Fail."

the use of ancient "sus laws" had legitimated "the administrative basis for what is tantamount to a pass law society."[52] According to one commentator, it suddenly appeared to many white Britons that "fury had been unleashed," redoubling fears about the volatile proximity of colonizers and colonized within the confined spaces of postcolonial British cities.[53] This meant that white Britons were able to scapegoat both black "pathology" and police "prejudice" as the cause of increasing inequality, thereby preserving a form of white privilege in such a way that disavowed structural racism. Insisting publicly that rising black unemployment could not justify the extent of civil unrest in Brixton, the Thatcher government redoubled heavy policing of black neighborhoods, upheld the use of "sus laws," and (as has only recently become clear) prepared secretive plans to deploy the military and evacuate white city residents.[54] The idea that state action was a response to black violence dissimulated structural racism and reproduced the exceptional or spectacular character of blackness in postwar Britain.

In December 1985, only a few months after renewed unrest in London, the Arts Council once more took up the topic of "ethnic minority arts." Its members looked again in particular at Khan's 1976 study. Marked by a shift away from an abstract sense of cultural "rights" and toward issues of public order, this time a more focused discussion took place, as the archived minutes of the Council's monthly meetings suggest. Placing the topic of "ethnic arts" firmly on to the agenda, the Council's Deputy Secretary-General, the art historian Anthony Everitt, broached a discussion of cultural policy in the context of racial equality and civil unrest. As the

[52] Quoted in Tyler, "Designed to Fail." This essay in *Race and Class* thus counted on leveraging increasing public condemnation among white British liberals of the apartheid regime in South Africa.
[53] Quoted in Benyon and Solomos, "The Simmering Cities."
[54] Alan Travis, "Thatcher Government Toyed with Evacuating Liverpool after 1981 Riots," *The Guardian*, December 29, 2011. Available at <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2011/dec/30/thatcher-government-liverpool-riots-1981>.

minutes of the meeting in December 1985 show, this was the first time since its publication in 1976 that the Council had given significant consideration to Khan's report. Looking back over the previous decade, Everitt declared soberly that the Council had "largely failed to realise its objective" of providing "high quality Asian and Afro-Caribbean art" with "its fair share of public funding." Furthermore, he suggested, "there were signs throughout the country, and particularly in London, that this issue was reaching explosion point," invoking what can only be understood as a direct reference to "the riots." For this reason, Everitt concluded, "it would be timely for Council to take positive action."[55] These details underscore how the Council's renewed attention to Khan's study emerged as one part of a disciplinary strategy designed to contain black protest.[56] While multiculturalism was understood to provide a means for controlling a potentially ungovernable population, official inaction seemed to prophesy nothing less than an "explosion" of the nation, one which threatened to rift and expose the fault lines of the Empire within. A paternal discourse of "positive action" toward British people color deemed capable of producing "high quality… art" formed the counterpart to strategies of militarized policing that were directed toward people of color for whom practices of police "surveillance" would be deemed a more prudent approach.

Following its discussion of Khan's study in December 1985, the Arts Council began to revise British arts policies according to a multicultural agenda. Adapting an older race relations discourse to fit the Thatcherite interests of individual freedoms and accountabilities, efforts to multiculturalize government arts funding in Britain designated the cultural diversity of the British nation as both the rationale and the new goal of official antiracism. Adopted in the

[55] AACGB 36/11.
[56] See Kundnani, *The End of Tolerance*, 45.

financial year 1985/86 and announced triumphantly in the 1985/86 annual *Report*, the Arts Council's multiculturalism inaugurated increased public funding for British artists of color:

> During the year, the Council published its action plan on ethnic minority arts… [T]his was… an important step on the road to the vitally important goal we are seeking, namely, to ensure that the Council's policies and the Council's actions reflect the multi-cultural society we live in. […]
>
> The last two decades have seen a growth of arts activity amongst British people of Afro-Caribbean and Asian origin. African dancers and musicians have enjoyed an increased awareness and appreciation amongst audiences of all ages, artistic inclinations and ethnic origins… Similarly, the Asian music, dance and theatre traditions have blossomed and received wide acclaim. Black British people have drawn upon their own experiences of cultural and social deprivation to realise new and vibrant forms of artistic expression… [T]hese artists have developed a powerful voice, which, if heard and acknowledged, will have a profound and enriching influence upjon [*sic*] the artistic life of our multi-cultural society.[57]

The Arts Council's 1986 statement reveals much about how an official discourse of liberal multiculturalism in Thatcherite Britain symbolized racial justice as cultural integration rather than material redistribution, and stressed full recognition and expression of identity in such a way that fit well with Thatcherism's post-Keynesian emphasis on individual freedoms. For one, the Council's statement asserts that a new "multi-cultural" policy will "reflect" contemporary British "society," even though this "goal" is deferred to an unspecified point in the future.

As it re-imagines the nation as plural and diverse, the Council's "action plan on ethnic minority arts" creates and distinguishes between subjects of privilege and stigma. According to the statement, those who successfully "live in" multiculturalism are accorded the most value. While it notionally includes of people "of all… ethnicities," this category not only implies a white racial formation, but also requires "awareness and appreciation" of nonwhite culture:

---

[57] Arts Council of Great Britain, *41st Annual Report and Accounts 1985/86* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1986), 4; 9.

practices of consumption that become key to living comfortably alongside Britain's racialized populations. In addition, the policy offers to extend "our multi-cultural society" selectively to people of color. Specifically, certain "British people of Afro-Caribbean and Asian origin" become eligible for inclusion into "multi-cultural society," but require "our" assistance in order to do so. As producers of raw material for multicultural consumption, postcolonial black Britons are included on the condition that their cultural labor will have an "enriching influence" on British "multi-cultural society." They remain distinct even as they are incorporated into the national community.[58] Finally, those who do not already "enjoy" the "appreciation" of "our multi-cultural society" are excluded entirely. This final, abject category is represented as a state of "social deprivation" that is inhabited by isolated racialized populations who live "amongst themselves," an anomalous "growth" within the modern nation. Although it claims that multiculturalism can simply be "heard," multicultural policy becomes an alibi for national accumulation that secures the precarity of the colonized and their descendants.

As the Arts Council's multicultural thinking was translated into policies for arts funding, a major component of the changes to cultural policy was the Council's decision to appoint people of color to positions on its advisory committees. For example, in the 1985/86 financial year, the painter Balraj Khanna joined the Arts Council subcommittee dealing with visual art, and the filmmaker Isaac Julien was enlisted to serve on the subcommittee on film and broadcasting.[59] In addition, the Council invited the artist Gavin Jantjes to form a "Monitoring Committee" on its new "Ethnic Minority Arts Action Plan." By the late, the results of the Council's multicultural agenda were in evidence far more widely. For example, the annual

[58] See Ahmed, *Strange Encounters,* 95–113.
[59] Arts Council of Great Britain, *41st Annual Report and Accounts 1985/86*, […].

Report of 1987/88 shows that the Council added dozens of arts groups run by people of color as revenue clients during this two-year period. While many of these new clients are easily identifiable by name as "ethnic minority" organizations, most were funded under budget line-items categorized by art-form, rather than as "ethnic minority" clients under the existing category of "Community Centres and Arts Projects." Groups such as the Theatre of Black Women and the British Asian Theatre Company received funding allocated for "Drama," while the Black Music Fair, the Centre for Indian Arts and the Chinese Cultural Centre were granted funds for "Music." In the Arts Council's revised schema of national culture, the picture that emerges of mid-1980s Britain is one in which the richness and variety of racialized cultural production far exceeds even that in Khan's account a decade earlier.

In general, however, the Council continued to make its existing clients and the "fine arts" a financial priority. For instance, the total sum of money that the Arts Council granted to around twenty music organizations run by people of color (£170,000) in 1987/88 represented less than 2% of the funding granted that year to the Royal Opera Company (£12,415,960). Instead, the Council's new framework of cultural pluralism could represent racial equality in terms of full recognition and diverse expressions of identity, values that accorded well with Thatcherism's emphasis on individual freedoms and entrepreneurship. By initiating "across-the-board" increases to public funding for artists of color, the Council's new discourse of multiculturalism, in its shift from upholding the cultural rights of nonwhite ethnic groups to securing national cohesion, formally included people of color as part of British public culture, ratifying an official antiracism that conceded to minimal redistribution of public resources.

By the end of the 1980s, the Arts Council not only had greatly increased the proportion of its grant moneys that it distributed to black arts organizations, but would also mandate that its

historic clients, including established theatre and opera companies, constitute "at least 4%" of their workforce with people of color. Although the figure of four percent represented perhaps the most conservative estimate of Britain's black population in the mid 1980s, people of color and their cultural production received greatly increased government support throughout the 1980s, as the Arts Council continued to make funding for "ethnic arts" a priority. To the extent that the Arts Council succeeded in its stated aim in 1985 to "richly enhance the nation's prestige," this vision of the British nation was newly framed around a rhetoric of multiculturalism and a practice of (limited) economic redistribution toward people of color. Rather than turn to current cultural practices concerned with antiracist politics, this shift toward multicultural policy was implemented by reviving Khan's 1976 study, and used it as evidence to impose new funding strategies across Britain. As its members reread earlier forms of antiracist politics in the mid 1980s, the Arts Council reinforced the racial identity of different cultural forms, while requiring employment practices that were characterized by racial diversity.

Opera played a specific role within this "discourse of beleaguerment" surrounding British institutions of white and European high culture during the Thatcher era. Of all the art forms represented by the Arts Council's established roster of clients in the 1980s, opera was often identified—in both official and public commentary—as the most "elitist" art-form subsidized by the British government and, for this reason, the cultural practice least suitable for liberal-multicultural practices of consumption and mobility.[60] As liberal-multicultural calculations entered into the Arts Council's decisions about cultural value, opera seemed unable to compete

[60] See R. J. C. Graham, J. M. Norman and D. C. S. Shearn, "Cost Effective Opera Subsidy," *The Journal of the Operational Research Society* 34, no. 10 (October 1983): 953–60. Also see Alexandra Wilson, "Killing Time: Contemporary Representations of Opera in British Culture," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 19, no. 3 (November 2007): 249–70.

against the cultural production of British people of color in the new market for racialized culture. These new cultural policies echoed criticism leveled by Naseem Khan and other British people of color against the Arts Council's prioritization of opera. Yet, instead of illuminating the wider exclusions of the British welfare state, the Arts Council's multicultural policies preempted material solutions to impoverishment. Existing racialized hierarchies of cultural value actually remained largely intact insofar as opera and other genres of white and European high culture continued to receive the vast majority of British government funding for the arts throughout the 1980s. Nevertheless, a series of minimally redistributive changes to British cultural policy, rhetorically cast as part of official commitments to liberal-multicultural antiracism, meant that a sense of beleaguerment was keenly felt among opera directors and managers. Thus, it is perhaps not surprising that a meeting of opera directors and managers from around the world in 1985 reported on both the current "great feeling of crisis" among opera companies, especially in Britain.[61] In particular, it seemed to them that under the Thatcher government public subsidies to opera faced a particularly precarious future. As a key trope for establishing and tracking multicultural settlements in Thatcherite Britain, opera helps clarify how Thatcherite cultural policy could appear progressive while disabling effective antiracism.

Such contradictions about opera's role in the postcolonial national community are particularly evident in *The Glory of the Garden*, an extensive policy document published by the Arts Council in 1984. The report issues the Arts Council's first significant public commitment to a liberal-multicultural agenda, yet it is also significant in its use of opera in Britain to thematize this shift in cultural policy. Acknowledging that the Arts Council has recently been the subject of

[61] Lies Askonas-Shepherd et al, "The Future of Opera," *Daedalus* 115, no. 4 (Fall 1986): 1–92.

"vociferous expressions of concern" on the part of its established clients, the report sets out to respond directly to criticism of its policies from members of the white metropolitan elite.[62] Rather than meeting their demands, however, *The Glory of the Garden* positions itself as an unbiased arbitrator of cultural factionalizing. Introducing London as a model of an "artistic metropolis," the report imagines a reader who possesses the economic and racial credentials to become a good multicultural citizen and can be taught to accept multicultural settlements.[63] In particular, *The Glory of the Garden* outlines a series of "changes" to British cultural policy that will presumptively "serve" what it maintains are the "changing… requirements of a multicultural society."[64] Thus, satisfying these "requirements" becomes simply a case of announcing revisions to official rosters of cultural value. Meanwhile, the impoverishment of the British working class in general, and the abandonment of racialized populations in particular, disappear from view within the state's remit of responsibilities.

The Glory of the Garden uses opera to symbolize the wasteful practices and cultural biases of the Keynesian welfare state, in turn portraying post-Keynesian times in terms of fairness, representation, and diversity, despite the increasing material inequalities attendant to the Thatcher revolution. Specifically, the report identifies opera in Britain as a particularly egregious overspend of public funds, "an expensive business" that still accounts for "too high" a "proportion of its funds." It lists several opera companies, including the Handel Opera Society and the New Opera Company, as specific candidates for future withdrawals of public funds, while issuing no apology for announcing the disbandment of the opera company Opera 80. These

[62] Arts Council of Great Britain, *The Glory of the Garden: The Development of the Arts in England, a Strategy for a Decade* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1984), 1; 2.
[63] *Ibid*., v.
[64] *Ibid*., 1; 2.

changes are portrayed as brokering a fair and democratic balance between competing interests, reinforcing the notion that market values of cultural property and individual mobility provide adequate solutions to Britain's social ills. Importantly, such concepts of fairness, in their emphases on cultural diversity as a mode of governance, discard any state accountability for material well-being. Indeed, Thatcher's attack on the welfare state often focused on the excesses of state bureaucracy; a stigma around the racialized figure of the "welfare scrounger" would become indispensable to Thatcherism's construction of consent for further divestments of state responsibilities.[65] By redefining opera subsidies as a strain on government funds, *The Glory of the Garden* prepared the ground for any recipients of public resources to represent a hindrance to Britain's economic recovery and social cohesion.

As it attempts to teach liberal values of tolerance and cultural pluralism within a framework of national accumulation, *The Glory of the Garden* explains opera's reduced role in official definitions of British culture as an effect of redistribution to people of color. Alongside assenting to reductions of the public subsidies and institutional prestige afforded to opera, the report asks its readers to endorse increases to government funding to British people of color. It announces that much greater amounts of government funding will be allocated to racialized cultural production, identifying numerous dance, drama and music organizations comprised mainly of people of color as candidates for increases to their grants-in-aid. The Phoenix Dance Company, characterized in the report as "an exciting company of young Black dances," is singled out as "a good example of the considerations which underlie much of the Council's

[65] See Smith, *New Right Discourse on Race and Sexuality*, 178–79. Also see Stuart Hall, "The Neo-Liberal Revolution," *Cultural Studies* 25, no. 6 (2011): 705–728; and Susan Hayward, "Blacks in Britain: Racial Discourse in UK Politics and Media," *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media* 41 (May 1997): 49–58.

approach to its strategy [for national cultural policy]."[66] It is significant that the report posits the success of Phoenix Dance as taking place well before the company began to receive public subsidy. Within a neoliberal emphasis on economic self-reliance and entrepreneurialism, nonwhite cultural production stands out as a valuable raw material because it had not received government grants in the past. The group's success independent of public subsidies—that is, as a result of cultural labor exchanged without compensation on the capitalist market—becomes evidence of its worthiness for subsequent reward. This evokes and then powerfully erases the bitterly contested history of racial discrimination in the Arts Council's policies, tokenizing members of a new racialized elite in such a way that made it possible to pathologize the racialized poor as culturally handicapped.[67] Moreover, while the report includes racialized culture within official definitions of British national identity, this takes place at the cost of re-categorizing the labor of its production as compensated by public funds, rather than the result of individual and entrepreneurial efforts. As a key public document of British official multiculturalism, *The Glory of the Garden* offers people of color inclusion within the national community specifically via the stigmatized category of the welfare recipient, while values of fairness, meritocracy and noteworthy achievement attach to the privatized interests of capital. In the logic of the Arts Council's new policies, adapting appropriately to "multicultural society" means loosening personal attachments to traditional cultural practices—for which opera becomes paradigmatic—and consenting to certain compromises in order to reward people of color who demonstrate exceptional entrepreneurial skills.[68]

---

[66] Arts Council of Great Britain, *The Glory of the Garden*, 5.
[67] See Tariq Modood, *Multicultural Politics: Racism, Ethnicity, and Muslims in Britain* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), esp. 82–100.
[68] On the British state's production of the racialized migrant as entrepreneur(ial), see Conlon and Gill, "Gagging Orders," 241–59.

In this way, liberal-multicultural protocols in Thatcherite Britain worked to identify white and European high culture, and opera in particular, as bereft. While this often involved the promotion of racialized cultural production over opera, it could also take the form of explicit demands made by the Arts Council on its opera clients. For example, as part of its "Ethnic Minority Action Plan" of 1985 and 1986, the Arts Council introduced a policy of mandating that many of its opera clients constitute "at least 4%" of their workforce with British people of color.[69] A memo sent to state-subsidized opera companies in February 1986 exemplified this aspect of an official multicultural agenda, which, in the terms of a fair and democratic redistribution of public resources to British people of color, sought to impose a series of top-down changes to opera production. The key portion of the memo reads as follows:

> As part of the implementation of its Equal Opportunities and in line with its stated objectives in *The Glory of the Garden*, the Arts Council wishes to encourage the employment of people from Britain's ethnic minority communities in the arts and the development of opportunities for ethnic minority art forms, artists and audiences. The Council would wish to put particular emphasis on the needs of people of Afro-Caribbean and Asian origins.
>
> I am writing to signal the Council's expectation that the organisations which it supports will adopt a similar view and to ask you what policies your organisation has adopted in this field and how far they have been implemented.
>
> At its meetings in December 1985 and January 1986 the Arts Council approved a plan of action. This will be applied, in the first instance, to its own operations. The Council will also expect arts organisations which it subsidises to adopt parallel plans for their own operations. The measurement of these plans and their implementation will form part of the future evaluation of all client organisations.
>
> Policies are seldom implemented without financial consequences. Our plan of action identifies the prime need to shift financial resources. As a first stage the Council has resolved to ensure that by the end of two years 1986/87 and 1987/88 not less than 4% of its turnover will be spent on: the employment of Afro-Caribbean and Asian people, the promotion of Afro-Caribbean and Asian art forms and the encouragement, through marketing, of audiences from these communities.

[69] See Gavin Janjtes, "The Long March from 'Ethnic Arts' to 'New Internationalism'" [1993], reprinted in *Black British Culture and Society*, 265–70.

> The Arts Council will be able to achieve this objective only if it attracts the co-operation of supported organisations who it will expect to indicate a shift in policy and in related expenditure which is measurable and can be monitored over the next two years. I hope that your organisation will be able to accept and work towards the Council's target.[70]

Particularly significant is how this document issues both the threat of official regulation and an invitation to contribute positively toward a project of national renewal. On the one hand, the memo rehearses oppositional critiques of "Eurocentric" priorities and biases, where opera symbolizes a European high culture that must be forced to surrender its institutional prestige to preferred notions of cultural pluralism. British opera companies are portrayed as a vestige of Keynesian policies: as unrepresentative, undemocratic and bereft of value within a new global market in minoritized cultures. While contemporary British culture is re-imagined as multicultural, state-funded opera companies in Britain become paradigmatic of an outdated welfare state that perpetuated certain racial exclusions and has thereby failed to keep pace with British social change. Thus, opera companies are to be "monitored" by a disciplinary state apparatus that advocates multicultural diversity, represented here as an assault opera's privileged status under the Keynesian welfare state.[71] As it advocates for institutional accountability to racialized minorities, the memo represents such legislative reforms schematically as the redistribution of public funds—from European opera to "Afro-Caribbean and Asian art forms"—

[70] ACGB/51/98, Packet 2 of 4, n.p.

[71] Gavin Janjtes, one of the Arts Council's first paid advisors on "ethnic arts" in the 1980s, maintains that "[n]o organization was bullied into doing something it felt it could not do." See Janjtes, "The Long March," 268. In fact, Janjtes is correct, but for the wrong reasons. As the archive of the Arts Council's communications with its clients makes clear, the "4% rule" could easily be widely flouted so long as client organizations reported that they were simply considering ways in which to implement to new policy. The Arts Council needed its clients only to provide written testimony of their adherence in principle to these multicultural goals. (See ACGB/51/98). This suggests that the effects of such policies were characterized by a corporate culture, one of diminishing responsibility for the material well-being of impoverished lives. On bureaucracy as a diversionary strategy of multicultural policy, see Sara Ahmed, "'You End Up Doing the Document Rather than Doing the Doing': Diversity, Race Equality and the Politics of Documentation," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30, no. 4 (2007): 590–609.

and the requirement that British opera companies follow specific business practices that presumptively provide the means to achieve a more balanced set of racial outcomes. Thus, the memo seeks to recalibrate national cultural institutions according to the unsubstantiated assumption that people of color are currently un- or under-represented by British opera companies, a charge that the memo imports and adapts from antiracist oppositional movements. While it asks white metropolitan elites to accept a series of progressive compromises to their traditional privileges and the prestige of European high culture, it also conceals the power these cohorts wielded in Thatcherism's racial orders.

The memo encourages elite white Britons to see themselves as participating positively in antiracist goals, at least insofar as they conform to officially sanctioned protocols for accommodating racialized populations. Wendy Brown has analyzed the capacity of liberal multiculturalisms to create hierarchies of human value in relation to official repertories of compromise: the liberal-multicultural order, she argues, "offers a robe of modest superiority in exchange for yielding."[72] Likewise, the Arts Council's memo to its opera clients grants cultural elites the privileged status of multicultural citizen. It "expect[s]" the management of British opera companies to "co-operat[e]" with nominally redistributive policies, while people of color are not assigned any parallel role in promoting opera. Rather, the memo implies that nonwhite Britons remain the presumed objects of multicultural accommodation, not only reinforcing the stigmatized latecomer status of racialized populations in postwar Britain, but also calibrating the parameters of nonwhite inclusion within neoliberal practices of cultural consumption and mobility in such a way that prepares the ground for further disenfranchisements of impoverished

[72] Brown, *Regulating Aversion*, 25.

populations of color. Postcolonial black Britons ("people of Afro-Caribbean and Asian origins") are assumed to have "needs" that include gaining admission to British operatic institutions, both as opera-going audience members and in the form of "employment," yet people of color are not called upon to voice this request. As a case in point, the Arts Council's figure of four percent corresponded only to an official estimate—and a very conservative one—of the proportion of Britain's population that was nonwhite in the mid 1980s, even though several communities of color in Britain were demanding at the same time that the state count them.[73]

As a contradictory site of surveillance and privatization, the Arts Council's directive to its opera clients interpellated progressive constituencies for public policies that abandoned impoverished communities of nonwhite Britons. The memo appears to mandate both that state-funded opera companies become representative of a multicultural citizenry and that hierarchies of cultural value are replaced by pluralist conceptions of cultural simultaneity, yet delegates these duties to white metropolitan elites in such a way that preserves their racial privileges. In other words, it outsources the responsibility for racial justice to white metropolitan elites, while making unaccountability to people of color a condition of its multicultural polices. Thus, despite the ways in which the Thatcher revolution abandoned large majorities of nonwhite populations to "the new Empire within," the measure of a 4% quota or target symbolizes a state management of the national economy and labor force that promises to overcome racialized inequality with bureaucratic objectivity.[74] While casting the postwar tradition of British state-subsidized opera as its antagonist, this multicultural formalism in fact attempts to discipline the oppositional

[73] See Jacqueline Nassy Brown, "The Racial State of the Everyday and the Making of Ethnic Statistics in Britain," *Social Text* 27, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 11–36.
[74] See Roderick A. Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things: The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 219.

initiatives of insurgent antiracisms in Britain, such as Rasheed Araeen's sustained efforts throughout the 1970s and 1980s to challenge the disenfranchisement of minoritized lives, histories and cultures.[75] While Aareen and others had highlighted British cultural policy in order to assay the postwar retrenchment of colonialist governmentality, the Arts Council's multicultural initiatives appropriated these maneuvers in such a way that preempted material solutions to impoverishment and super-exploitation by substituting representation for redistribution. Thus, this memo to the managements of British opera companies not only partook of a Thatcherite liberal-multicultural agenda that divested from state accountability to British people of color and reconstituted whiteness as the preferred racial formation of the national community, but also partook in it; suturing official antiracism to state policy and socializing white Britons to become good multicultural subjects, the memo re-centered opera and the white metropolitan elites that ran British opera companies, yet cast this rhetorically as a compromise.

In this way, the Arts Council saw in the goal of multiculturalism a chance to put in place a form of quantifiable, "cost-effective" support for its performing arts clients. For this reason, the memorandum to clients warned that "[t]he measurement of these plans and their implementation will form part of the future evaluation of all client organisations."[76] Indeed, where an economic study commissioned by the Arts Council on the "cost-effectiveness" of opera had decried the lack of any system whereby the Council could evaluate the activities of its clients, the goal of multiculturalism represented to the Council a chance to redress this seeming lacuna in its operations.[77] Yet the responses from opera companies were generally dismissive. Many of the

[75] See Rasheed Araeen, "The Art Britain *Really* Ignores [1979]" in *Making Myself Visible* (London: Kala Press, 1984), 100–105.
[76] ACGB/51/98 2/4.
[77] See Graham, Norman, and Shearn, "Cost Effective Opera Subsidy," 953–60.

larger companies replied in boilerplate terms that they were simply working on implementing such multicultural policies. For example, Kent Opera one of the Council's smaller opera clients, failed to reply at all. Now approaching the issue with an eye toward cutting funding from some opera clients entirely, the Council wrote again to Kent Opera in sterner language:

> We note that you do not promote arts of other than European Cultures. Nor is there any apparent opportunity for presenting or marketing your work to encourage Afro/Caribbean and Asian audience development. Also we note that Kent Opera does not appear to be taking steps to ensure that training opportunities for management and staff are being made available in all aspects of Race Awareness. Also, no attempt to date appears to have been made to enlarge the racial composition of your Board, or any proposals to rectify this in the future. These are points which will no doubt be open to further discussion by the Monitoring Group.[78]

The Council conceived of multiculturalism in opera as requiring radical changes to all aspects of its opera clients' operations; it understood opera and multiculturalism to have wholly divergent histories and goals, a situation that its heavy-handed policy could then presumably rectify.

As the Arts Council began to introduce an avowedly "multi-cultural" set of policies in the 1980s, it also reinscribed an institutional division between relatively small-scale "community arts" and larger-scale clients of the Council. "Community arts" became a label for cultural production that apparently inhered "organically" in ethnicized social groups. Thus, "community arts" diverged from the type of "cultureless" state promoted by Thatcherism, under which the arts were supposed to conform to the marketplace. In this way, the state divested itself of responsibility for such cultural production, preferring only a looser association with the newly privatized sectors of "public" culture. In light of the widespread public discourse surrounding the apparent connection between recent incidents of urban unrest and the presence in these spaces of immigrant populations (who purportedly "lacked recognition" in British national public culture),

[78] ACGB/51/98 2/4.

multicultural arts policies were largely implemented from above as a matters of urgency and public order. Thus, where the Arts Council took initial "steps" along a "journey" toward multicultural policy, it did so in the name of the "black immigrant"—the *arrivant* who, as Anna Marie Smith has shown, provided the occasion for the invention of a "British identity [that] had remained absolutely intact throughout all external accidents of imperial and post-colonial history," a solution, in other words, to the "post-colonial crisis of national identity" by which the "black immigrant" becomes figured as a "late additio[n] to an already complete body."[79] Likewise the Arts Council could conceive of no prior connection between opera and ethnic minorities, in whose name a policy of multiculturalism was to be implemented. The institution of British opera, like that of British public culture in general, could only be seen as an "already complete body," which was then subjected to the "late addition" of multiculturalism.

As the art form most often tainted in post-war Britain by the charge of elitism, and the one in receipt of the greatest amount of funding from the Arts Council, opera bore a heavy burden of the demand to become "cost-effective." Arts policymakers and administrators attempted to mitigate claims of opera's apparent "cost-*in*effectiveness" via a demand that opera become "multi-cultural." In this case, multiculturalism was thus imagined through the lens of privatization and "cost-effectiveness." The Arts Council's attempts to develop a "multi-cultural" opera policy cohered with a liberal-multicultural conception of cultural diversity solely within the context of a consumer economy, where the consumption of racialized cultural production was supposed to express antiracism. As decisions about the makeup of government-funded public culture in Britain turned increasingly toward models of consumption borrowed from a neoliberal

[79] Smith, *New Right Discourse*, 25; 130.

Thatcherite political economy, cultural policymakers regarded opera as a particularly stubborn obstacle to redefining British public culture in terms of the consumer economy. Opera brought with it the baggage of its purported elitism, which Thatcherite multiculturalism could interpret as its limited market distribution, and its direct historical connection in Keynes's postwar welfare state, which Thatcherism set out to dismantle. The ambition to "multiculturalize" British opera therefore seemed to entail the task of bringing professional opera production companies—which, except for Glyndebourne, were all clients of the Arts Council—into compliance with a modern consumer economy. At a time when liberal multiculturalism symbolized the economic recovery and social solidarity of the British nation, opera was represented officially as an unnecessary and expendable burden upon public resources, one that pulled in the direction of beliefs in white and European cultural superiority that were now, rhetorically at least, considered obsolete.

In the final section of this chapter, I turn to Judith Weir's *A Night at the Chinese Opera*, first performed in 1987. Instead of reproducing claims that the rise of multiculturalism had rendered British opera a beleaguered institution, *A Night at the Chinese Opera* responded to the challenge of rehabilitating opera within liberal-multicultural protocols for public culture by establishing a role for opera within the strictures of official multiculturalism in 1980s Britain. Yet, it does so not only by re-imagining operatic tradition as global in reach and racially inclusive, but also by satirizing the tendency of British official multiculturalism to treat cultural performance—and opera, in particular—as the object of dour suspicion. In this way, *A Night at the Chinese Opera* dramatized a fundamental contradiction of British liberal-multicultural policies, whereby multiculturalism was supposed to provide both a (descriptive) diagnosis of racial formation in 1980s Britain and a (prescriptive) solution to contemporary social ills, especially racial inequalities.

"Let Other Races Wield the Sword": Teaching Multiculturalism in Judith Weir's *A Night at the Chinese Opera*

> One had no trouble deciding the outstanding success of this year's [1987] Cheltenham Festival. If such a thing existed, the gold award would have gone to the world premiere of *A Night at the Chinese Opera*, an event that establishes Judith Weir, on her operatic debut, as a theatre composer of creative imagination, armed with the technical confidence and versatility to bring her ideas to fruition, original in thought and address, yet always in contact with her audience.
>
> — Kenneth Loveland, "Cheltenham"

At the time of its first production by the regional opera company Kent Opera, Judith Weir's *A Night at the Chinese Opera* was met with wide acclaim. The opera's premiere performance took place in July, 1987, as part of that year's Cheltenham International Festival of Music.[80] Among the several critics at the festival, Kenneth Loveland (quoted in the epigraph above) was not alone in identifying the opera as the most impressive of its many offerings.[81] The new music aficionado Paul Griffiths, well-known for repeating the view that opera was fundamentally an outdated and reactionary form, wrote in the *Times* that *A Night at the Chinese Opera* was the "news from Cheltenham" above anything else, while another critic described the opera as a "success at every level."[82] At a time when the entire institution of British opera seemed seriously endangered, this production of Weir's new work provided a rare occasion for optimism about the future of opera composition in Britain. Thus, the 1990s would begin, one commentator suggested, with new

---

[80] "Festival Program: The Forty-Third Cheltenham International Music," Archives of the Cheltenham Festivals (formerly the Cheltenham International Music Festival), Cheltenham, United Kingdom. Also see Anne Whitehouse, "Festivals: Celebrating the Best of British," *The Times* (March 21, 1987); and "Arts: Cheltenham Music Festival," *The Financial Times* (May 15, 1987).

[81] Kenneth Loveland, "Cheltenham," *The Musical Times* 128, no. 1735 (September 1987): 507–9; 507.

[82] Paul Griffiths, [Review of *A Night at the Chinese Opera*], *The Times* (July 9, 1987); and Andrew Clements, "A Chinese Night to Savour," *Financial Times* (July 11, 1987), 17. For example, see Griffiths' treatment of opera in *Modern Music: The Avant Garde since 1945* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1981), 248–70.

opera finding more support than ever among the people of "these islands," an achievement he attributed specifically to Weir's new work.[83]

A Night at the Chinese Opera represented a curious choice to represent the robustness of new British opera in the late twentieth century. The opera features few, if any, obvious markers of British culture and national identity, such as British source materials and settings. Moreover, the work takes as its subject the obsolescence of national operatic tradition within a world of cultural diversity and intercultural exchange. Weir's opera focuses in particular on two different traditions of music theatre that are usually considered highly disparate: Italian opera and classical Chinese drama. In the course of its three acts, *A Night at the Chinese Opera* dramatizes and juxtaposes these traditions by parodying their aesthetic codes and conventions.[84] Using parody as a means to summon different theatrical styles and idioms, the opera stages a kind of global anthology of music drama and a proximity between different Western and non-Western cultures, suggesting the inadequacy or obsolescence of any one national "operatic" tradition.[85] At a time when liberal multiculturalism appeared to provide a solution to Britain's "racial crisis" and a means by which to rejuvenate British national culture, *A Night at the Chinese Opera* seemed to offer a compelling model for reorganizing cultural practices in global and plural, rather than national and homogeneous, terms; although it is set in Yuan-dynasty China, its concerns were decidedly contemporary and far closer to home.

---

[83] Hartford, "Opera in Britain Today," 464–74; 465. In more recent years, another commentator has singled out this work as "testimony to… the strength of English composition" in the late twentieth century. Christopher Mark, "Opera in England: Taking the Plunge," in *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Opera*, ed. Mervyn Cooke (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 209–21; 221.

[84] Several critics have noted Weir's use of parody in *A Night at the Chinese Opera*, although not with sufficient detail. For example, see W. Anthony Sheppard, "Blurring the Boundaries: Tan Dun's *Tinte* and *The First Emperor*," *Journal of Musicology* 26, no. 3 (Summer, 2009): 285–326.

[85] On parody as a "mode of coming to terms with… the past," see Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (New York: Methuen, 1985), 4.

***

Born in Cambridge in 1954, Judith Weir has produced an extensive catalog of works since her earliest published compositions in the late 1970s. She began composition lessons with John Tavener while she was still at school, before studying with Robin Holloway as an undergraduate at Cambridge University. In 1974, Copland's support helped her earn a Koussevitzky Fellowship to study at Tanglewood with Gunther Schuller. As Weir recounts, Schuller's influence helped maintain her sense of distance from the compositional priorities of the postwar Darmstadt School and its adherents.[86] Thus, at an early stage in her career, Weir evaded the vogue for integral serialism and "new complexity" that occupied many other British composers of her generation. Since then, much of Weir's music has employed tonal idioms and sparing musical materials. She describes her effort to conceive of music "modally" and "melodically" as "a correction to what I had heard in the Sixties and Seventies when melody was not something that was really talked about very much."[87] In the estimation of one her most perspicuous critics, Weir assailed the new music establishment not with the revolutionary zeal of one its members, but with the parody and humor more typical of an "outsider."[88]

Yet, by the first decade of the twenty-first century Weir had become widely recognized as a living member of the British music establishment.[89] Her catalogue of works now included four full-length operas—*A Night at the Chinese Opera* (1987), *The Vanishing Bridegroom*

[86] Martin Dreyer, "Judith Weir, Composer: A Talent to Amuse," *The Musical Times* 122, no. 1663 (September 1981): 593–96; 593. Also see Ivan Hewett, "Judith Weir: What Tavener and Copland Taught Me," *The Telegraph* (January 10, 2008).
[87] Bernard Hughes and Judith Weir, "Judith Weir in Conversation," *Tempo* 59, no. 234 (October 2005): 21.
[88] Barbara White, "Music Drama on the Concert Stage: Voice, Character and Performance in Judith Weir's The Consolations of Scholarship," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 12, no. 1 (March 2000): 55–79.
[89] Lisa Colton, "The Female Exotic: Tradition, Innovation and Authenticity in the Reception of Music by Judith Weir," *Contemporary Music Review* 29, no. 3 (June 2010): 277–89.

(1990), *Blond Eckbert* (1993), and *Miss Fortune* (2012)—as well the television operas *Scipio's Dream* (1991) and *Armida* (2005). In 2008, a three-day festival at the Barbican Centre in London celebrated her music. Most recently, in July 2014, Weir replaced Peter Maxwell Davies as Master of the Queen's Music, a role roughly equivalent to that of Poet Laureate. Weir's appointment was heralded in the British press as especially significant for the fact that Weir will be the first woman to hold this position in its four-hundred-year history.[90]

One of Weir's earliest works, *King Harald's Saga* (1979), illustrates her provocative stance with regard to conventions and values of the "classical" music establishment. Weir composed *King Harald's Saga* specifically for the soprano Jane Manning, whom Weir involved throughout the creative process.[91] Ironically subtitled "Grand Opera in Three Acts," *King Harald's Saga* is in fact an un-staged, unaccompanied song-cycle for solo soprano lasting around ten minutes in performance. Composed during Weir's formative years, the work foreshadows her abiding interest in questioning and challenging the conventions of established musical genres, especially the scope and dimensions of large-scale categories, such as opera, the piano concerto, and the symphony. *King Harald's Saga* would also inaugurate Weir's practice of writing her own libretti for all her operas. Since then, Weir's critics have often seen her approach to opera as representative of the "anti-conventional urge in music theatre" in Western Europe and North American after the early 1960s.[92]

---

[90] For example, see Robert Booth, "Judith Weir to Be Appointed First Female Master of Queen's Music," *The Guardian*, accessed June 30, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/music/2014/jun/29/judith-weir-female-master-queens-music>.

[91] See Neil Brand, "Judith Weir [interview]," in *Dramatic Notes, Foregrounding Music in the Dramatic Experience*, ed. Neil Brand (Luton, UK: University of Luton Press, 1998), 40–41; and Hughes and Weir, "Judith Weir in Conversation," 20–27; 20.

[92] Robert Addlington, "Music Theatre since the 1960s," in *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Opera*, 225–43; 228–30.

A Night at the Chinese Opera originated soon after *King Harald's Saga* and long before Weir had become widely recognized by the British classical music establishment. Kent Opera's decision to commission Weir to write a full-length opera for the company represented a deliberate attempt on the part of Kent Opera's management to challenge preconceptions of opera as an antiquated and elite art-form.[93] In the early 1980s, the BBC approached Kent Opera with the offer of funding for the commission of a new opera, with production costs to be shared by both organizations.[94] Although she had already worked with Kent Opera, at this time Weir and her music were largely unknown to the public.[95] As one commentator remarked in 1981, Weir "has wafted an individual breath of fresh air into the sometimes stultifying, often cliquey hothouse of contemporary British music."[96] Kent Opera's permanent director Norman Platt invited Weir to fulfill the BBC commission partly on the basis of what he felt was the success and originality of her earlier vocal writing; Platt was gripped in particular by Weir's *King Harald's Saga*.[97] As a result, in 1983 Kent Opera first commissioned Weir to write a site-specific piece for members of Kent Opera and groups of inner-city high school students to perform in the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral; this site-specific commission would be titled *Black Spider* (1984). Thus, by the time she received the commission for what was to become *A Night at the Chinese Opera*, Weir's earlier music, especially *King Harald's Saga* and *The Black Spider*, positioned

[93] See Norman Platt's "mission statement" for Kent Opera written for the Arts Council's internal funding review in 1985, "Opera Provision outside London: Report of the Opera Study Group," ACGB/50/335 (Kent Opera), File 2 of 9.
[94] See Judith Weir, "Memoirs of an Accidental Film Artist," in *A Night in at the Opera: Media Representations of Opera*, ed. Jeremy Tambling (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 53–60.
[95] A few, relatively small-scale performances of her work between the late 1970s and the mid 1980s had resulted in a handful of references to Weir in academic journals and the British classical music press, but no commercial recordings of her music were yet available in 1987. See Dreyer, "Judith Weir, Composer," 593–96; 596.
[96] Dreyer, "Judith Weir, Composer." Also see David Wright, "Weir to Now?: David Wright Explores the Fastidious Musical World of Judith Weir," *The Musical Times* 134, no. 1806 (August 1993): 432–37.
[97] See Norman Platt, *Making Music* (London: Pembles, 2001), 79–80.

her as a composer whose vocal and stage works staked claims to lie outside the institutional framework of European opera.

As Weir's response to her second commission from Kent Opera, *A Night at the Chinese Opera* is a work that self-consciously takes on operatic traditions and institutions. Weir's title for the work playfully combines references to popular and non-Western culture.[98] On the one hand, it invokes the Marx Brother's classic comic film *A Night at the Opera* (1935) and the 1975 rock album of the same name by the British band Queen. Both these popular cultural texts draw on and satirize the conventions of Western operatic tradition, for which in each case nineteenth-century Italian grand opera serves as a potent symbol.[99] For example, in the Marx Brothers' film, Italian opera makes a brief but significant appearance in a scene that takes place at a performance of Verdi's *Il Trovatore* at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City. The film's send-up of the ritual of operatic performance coincides with a transnational displacement in the narrative from "Old World" Italy to "modern" New York City, where the reverent certainties of opera's aesthetic and cultural value in Europe are superseded by a putatively more egalitarian arrangement of cultural values in America. Yet, while the film traffics in an endlessly comedic disruption of *Il Trovatore*, in doing so it also retrofits European "traditional" or "aristocratic" culture for a democratic, New World environment. As the film's central conceit, its (operatically?) calamitous disruption of *Il Trovatore* forms an important precedent for Weir's subsequent treatment of operatic tradition in her opera.

---

[98] Gordon Downie, "Aesthetic Necrophilia: Reification, New Music, and the Commodification of Affectivity," *Perspectives of New Music* 42, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 264–75.
[99] Joy Calico, *Brecht at the Opera* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008), 15. Also see Ken McLeod, "Bohemian Rhapsodies: Operatic Influences on Rock Music," *Popular Music* 20, no. 2 (May 2001): 183–203.

On the other hand, Weir's title refers to non-Western cultural traditions signified by the Western term "Chinese opera." As Daphne Lei has documented, the English-language term "Chinese opera" as a catch-all name for many different types of Chinese classical Chinese drama (*xiqu*; lit. "theatre of song") derives from the commodification of Chinese theater troupes in San Francisco and New York City in the 1920s.[100] While live performances of classical Chinese drama remained largely absent from Britain's cultural offerings in the 1980s, the term "Chinese opera" betokened a rich and extensive foreign tradition, not least due to the sudden popularity of Hollywood *kung fu* films featuring scenes of elaborate performances of Chinese martial arts by Chinese actors, such as Jackie Chan, trained in classical Chinese drama.[101] To the extent that, as Celia Pang argues, the types of "all-encompassing theatrical entertainment" signified by "Chinese opera" have been made to represent "the essential and supreme expression of Chinese culture," Weir's use of the term in her title frames the work as offering a multicultural twist on the kind of democratization of opera thematized in Marx Brothers film and the Queen album.

Weir's own libretto for the opera is a composite construction made up of Chinese and European sources. Weir had already compiled and adapted several Chinese texts for use in her

---

[100] See Daphne P. Lei, *Operatic China: Staging Identity Across the Pacific* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 8–11; and *Alternative Chinese Opera in the Age of Globalization: Performing Zero* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 9–10. Also see Joshua Goldstein, "Mei Lanfang and the Nationalization of Peking Opera, 1912–1930," *positions* 7, no. 2 (1999): 377–420; Celica J. Pang, "(Re)cycling Culture: Chinese Opera in the United States," *Comparative Drama* 39, nos. 3–4 (Fall 2005): 361–396; Krystyn R. Moon, *Yellowface: Creating the Chinese in American Popular Music and Performance, 1850s–1920s* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005); and Guo Yingde, "An Overview of Research on Classical Chinese Drama in North America (1998–2008)," *Asian Theatre Journal*, 27, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 149–71.

[101] On Hollywood *kung fu* films and Chinese opera, see Pang, "(Re)cycling Culture." On the Chinese diaspora in late-twentieth-century Britain, including the effect of the *kung fu* films, see Gregor Benton and Edmund Terence Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800–Present: Economy, Transnationalism, Identity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). On Chinese opera in Britain, see Tong Soon Lee, "Grace Liu and Cantonese Opera in England: Becoming Chinese Overseas," in *Lives in Chinese Music*, ed. Helen Rees (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 119–43; and William A. Everett, "*Chu Chin Chow* and Orientalist Musical Theatre in Britain during the First World War," in *Music and Orientalism in the British Empire, 1780s–1940s*, eds. Martin Clayton and Bennett Zon (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 277–96.

earlier work *The Consolations of Scholarship* (1985), a song-cycle for soprano and mixed instrumental ensemble.[102] Weir's primary source for both *Consolations* and *Chinese Opera* was *The Orphan of Zhao* (*Zhaoshi gu'er*), a classical Chinese drama from the Yuan-dynasty era (1271–1368 AD) that is attributed to the playwright Chi Chun-hsiang, formed Weir's primary source for both; Weir read the play in Liu Jung-en's modern English translation published by Penguin in 1972.[103] Often reputed to be the first Chinese play translated into any European language, *The Orphan of Zhao* (or *The Orphan of Chao* or *The Zhao/Chao Family Orphan* or *The Orphan of the Zhao/Chao Family*) has a particularly storied history of Western translation, adaptation and performance, beginning in the eighteenth century with texts by William Hatchett in England, Voltaire in France, the Italian playwright Pietro Metastasio in Vienna, and Arthur Murphy in Ireland (Murphy's version was also given in Philadelphia in 1767).[104] In addition to *The Orphan of Zhao*, Weir also notes that her source material for *Chinese Opera* included the anonymous Yuan dynasty play *A Stratagem of Interlocking Rings* (also read in Liu Jung-en's translation), Paul Heng-chao's modern translation of the Mongolian legal code of 1291, and the travel writings of the fourteenth-century Italian merchant, explorer and diplomat Marco Polo, who reported that he first reached China in 1266 and again in around 1275 when the country was under the military rule of the Mongolian leader Kublai Khan. Thus, while Weir's source materials for *Chinese Opera* represent a collection of both Chinese and Italian (or "Eastern" and

[102] See White, "Music Drama on the Concert Stage."
[103] Judith Weir, *A Night at the Chinese Opera* (London: Novello, 1987). Weir's source was Liu Jung-en, ed., *Six Yüan Plays* (London: Penguin, 1972).
[104] Liu Wu-Chi, "The Original Orphan of China," *Comparative Literature* 5, no. 3 (Summer 1953): 193–212. Also see Hsin-yun Ou, "Four Epistles Concerning *The Orphan of China*," *Notes and Queries* 54, no. 1 (2007): 65–68. On more recent adaptations, see Wenwei Du, "Historicity and Contemporaneity: Adaptations of Yuan Plays in the 1990s," *Asian Theatre Journal* 18, no. 2 (Fall 2001): 222–37.

"Western") texts, they also attest to histories of East–West encounter dating back to the Yuan-dynasty era in the thirteenth century.

Set in the Yuan dynasty in "a provincial city on the north-west borders of late thirteenth-century China," the dramatic action of *Chinese Opera* takes place against the backdrop of the Mongolian military occupation of China under the Mongolian leader Kublai Khan—the period and provenance in which *The Orphan of Zhao* was apparently composed. Weir's opera features an extensive, diegetic staging of *The Orphan of Zhao*. This "play-within-the-play," referred to in the score as "A Performance of 'The Orphan of the Chao Family,'" constitutes almost all of the opera's second act; it consists of four main scenes, as well as an introductory "wedge" (an English-language term for the theatrical prologues and entr'actes that are common in classical Chinese drama of the Yuan era).[105] A short, final section of Act II (marked "Coda") interrupts the performance and reverts suddenly to the world of the "provincial city" of "late thirteenth-century China." The outer acts of the opera (Acts I and III) each consist of six scenes, although Act III is supplemented by a brief "Introduction," in which the character of Marco Polo makes his only appearance in the opera. In total, the three acts of the entire opera, including the Act II performance, last approximately 90 minutes. The work uses entirely Western-operatic voices and instruments: ten vocal soloists (who each play many different parts) and a relatively small symphony orchestra.

***

The drama of *Chinese Opera* revolves around the relationship between the performance of "The Orphan of the Chao Family" staged in Act II and the action that takes place in outer acts in

[105] See James I. Crump, "The Elements of Yüan Opera," *Journal of Asian Studies* 17, no. 3 (May 1958): 417–34.

"thirteenth-century China." *Chinese Opera* begins with the Mongol invasion of China by the Military Governor (countertenor) in the army of Kublai Khan (Scene 1), before charting in a series of snapshot scenes the birth, childhood, and early adulthood of the orphan Chao Lin (baritone). In Scene 2, which takes place soon after Chao Lin is born, Chao Lin's father Chao Sun (baritone), an "explorer and map maker," leaves the city and his family rather than live under Mongolian military occupation; Chao Sun's Wife (soprano), who is Chao Lin's mother, dies at this time. In Scene 3, Chao Lin, now an adolescent, begins to fall into favor with the Mongolian occupying forces, despite the efforts of the Chinese elders, the Nightwatchman (tenor) and the Scholar, Old P'eng (tenor), to keep Chao Lin's mind open to other cultures, such as traditional Chinese learned arts: "Let other races wield the sword," the Chinese elders instruct the adolescent Chao Lin, since learning Chinese "martial arts" provides the means to a bloodless victory over one's opponents and ultimately form a "peace" with one's adversaries.[106] Chao Lin fails to embrace "the art of unarmed combat" and instead collaborates with the Mongol forces, who give him command of areas of agriculture and civil engineering. As if on a whim, he nevertheless decides to attend a performance of "The Orphan of the Chao Family."

The diegetic performance of "The Orphan of the Chao Family" that makes up nearly all of Act II is set in an unnamed time and place, yet its action shares many features, including several similar names of personages, with the life story of Chao Lin. In total, the "Performance of 'The Orphan of the Chao Family'" lasts around 25 minutes, more or less a third of the entire opera, but its fast-paced drama, rapid-fire dialogue, and virtuosic part-doubling for the three performers on stage mean that for the audience it forms an especially engaging central section of

[106] Weir, *A Night at the Chinese Opera*, 34–40 (Act I, Scene 3).

Weir's opera. Played by three Actors, the plot of "The Orphan of the Chao Family" in Weir's opera concerns the Orphan of Chao, who is the son of the sworn enemy of "the wicked General Tu-an-Ku." Early on, the General Tu-an-Ku orders the death of Chao's parents and hopes also to kill Chao. In fact, Chao grows up as the adopted son of the Tu-an-Ku, who at first does not know of the child's identity; for years, Chao likewise remains unaware of his real parentage and the General's (his adopted father's) erstwhile plot against his family. Matters come to a head when Chao is 21 years old (the same age as Chao Lin, who is all the while "watching" the "performance"). After an earthquake wrought by the gods, Chao discovers his identity and the fate of his parents and plots to kill General Tu-an-Ku in revenge. At this point, "The Orphan of the Chao Family" is suddenly cut short by an earthquake, beginning a series of obvious and often comedic parallels between the Chinese play and the subsequent action of the opera.

Act III begins with a brief appearance of Marco Polo (tenor), who blusters about the civil engineering projects of Kublai Khan's China in the form of a parody of Italian operatic recitative; Weir's text here is an Italian version of *The Travels of Marco Polo*.[107] The remainder of Act Three concerns Chao's realization that events in his life parallel those in the play he has just witnessed. Gripped by this realization, he begins to believe that he is destined to mimic the revenge plot of the play. Wild with frenzy, he attempts unsuccessfully to assassinate the Mongolian Governor on account of what he trusts (incorrectly) was the murder of his parents at the hands of the Governor. Chao Lin is led away by the Mongolian Solider to be executed for treason. In the opera's final scene, the Actors rehearse the final scene of "The Orphan of the

[107] Weir's source is presumably Giovanni Battista Baldelli Boni, *Il Milione di Marco Polo* (Firenze: Pagani, 1827) or subsequent nineteenth-century editions that are closely based on it, such as Adolfo Bartoli, *I viaggi di Marco Polo* (Firenze: F. Le Monnier, 1863). An annotated bibliography of editions of *The Travels of Marco Polo* is given in Hans Ulrich Vogel, *Marco Polo Was in China: New Evidence from Currencies, Salts and Revenues* (Leiden, Netherlands and Boston, MA: Brill, 2013).

Chao Family," in which the Orphan of Chao in fact prevails over the General Tu-an-Ku. Thus, the action of the opera, in which Chao Lin's assassination attempt is thwarted, ultimately diverges from the events portrayed in the performance of "The Orphan of the Chao Family," all too late for Chao Lin to become aware of this substantial differences between the two narratives.

Taken a whole, Weir's musical and dramatic language in *Chinese Opera* is eclectic. In the majority of the outer acts (Acts I and III), Weir employs musical idioms that remain largely unobtrusive and carefully illustrate the setting and text. Although the entire libretto in these sections of the opera is sung,[108] Weir uses almost entirely syllabic text setting in such a way that reflects the natural emphases of the words. Moreover, contrapuntal textures in the vocal parts are rare; vocal lines almost never overlap (even in large ensembles such as the Act I Sextet), except with unison text setting in duet or trio passages. The opera also marks divisions between scenes very clearly, often ending a scene with a cadential gesture in the orchestra and beginning a new scene with a contrasting tempo, musical affect, and orchestral timbre. All this renders the text readily comprehensible in performance and generally makes the orchestral music seem secondary to the action on stage. For instance, the clear demarcation of scenes in Act I means that this section of the opera can be more easily understood as a series of snapshot scenes covering the first twenty-one years of Chao Lin's life.

Several aspects of Weir's orchestral music in the outer acts also contribute to its feeling of unobtrusive background throughout much of the opera. Weir frequently uses ostinato figures, such as throughout Act I, Scene 3; they keep the orchestral music from conveying a narrative on

[108] The only exception to this is Chao Sun's spoken soliloquy (Act I, Scene 2), which is accompanied and given precise and complex rhythmic notation, and therefore sounds more like *Sprechstimme* than the "natural" speech of spoken theatre.

its own, thereby maintaining the emphasis on the libretto and the stage business. In addition, Weir's preference in this work for treble textures in the instrumental writing forestalls any sense of weighty harmonic tension.[109] The predominance of treble textures complement Weir's liberal use of familiar tonal (major and minor triad) sonorities without implying tonal key relationships, as well as atonal and chromatic harmonies without complex voice-leading; this evokes a "sense of weightlessness" in Weir's music, as David Wright has suggested.[110] Throughout the work, instrumental lines very often double vocal lines, diminishing the autonomy of the orchestral music (or "making a show of unpretentiousness," as Paul Griffiths writes).[111] The vocal lines themselves typically give the impression of pitch centricity (a sense of having a tonal or pitch center), rather than a functional tonal harmony, a technique that surely reflects Weir's earlier studies of Scottish folksong.[112] Several melodic passages in the opera use modes, such as Dorian and pentatonic modes, that are common in European folk melodies and, in the case of pentatonic modes, Chinese folk melodies.[113]

A subtly syncretic approach to Western and non-Western musical idioms typifies the music of the outer acts of Weir's opera.[114] For example, the short orchestral prelude attests to the

---

[109] Paul Griffiths, *Modern Music and After: Directions since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 241.
[110] David C. H. Wright, "Weir, Judith," *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, accessed June 7, 2016), http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/46315.
[111] Griffiths, *Modern Music and After*, 241.
[112] Anna Theresa Weesner, "Tonality in Nontonal Music: A Study of Judith Weir's *The Consolations of Scholarship*," (DMA Dissertation, Cornell University, 1995).
[113] For example, the short aria for the Mezzo Actor in Act I (Scene 5; "Chansonette") is cast mainly in an anhemitonic ("black keys") pentatonic mode on G. On "pentatonic" modes in Chinese folk music, see Ho Lu-Ting and Han Kuo-huang, "On Chinese Scales and National Modes," *Asian Music* 14, no. 1 (1982): 132–215; and Nancy Yunwha Rao, "Hearing Pentatonicism through Serialism: Integrating Different Traditions in Chinese Contemporary Music," *Perspectives of New Music* 40, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 190-231.
[114] On syncretism of Western and non-Western musical idioms, see Yayoi Uno Everett, "Intercultural Synthesis in Postwar Western Art Music: Historical Contexts, Perspectives, Taxonomy," in *Locating East Asia in Western Art Music*, eds. Yayoi Uno Everett and Frederick Lau (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 1–21. Steven Stucky has analyzed similar procedures and effects in the music of Witold Roman Lutosławski. See Steven Stucky, *Lutosławski and His Music* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 5.

direct influence of twentieth-century French composer Olivier Messiaen in its application of Messiaen's third "mode of limited transposition" on E (E, F, F-sharp, G-sharp, A, B-flat, C, C-sharp, D) to derive almost all the pitches, its placement of triads in a high treble register, and its isorhythmic pattern of repeated rhythmic cells.[115] Messiaen's modal and isorhythmic compositional procedures stem from his study of Indian *ragas* and *talas* and account for what Paul Griffiths has called Messiaen's "divergence from the Western tradition."[116] As Richard Taruskin has argued, Messiaen's "modes of limited transposition" and isorhythmic techniques seem to "arrest the sort of progression on which musical 'development' (i.e., the sonorous illusion of directed motion) depends."[117] Edward Said has referred to Messiaen's harmonic and rhythmic procedures in a similar way as representing an "anti- or non-narrative alternative to the mainstream tradition [of Western classical music]."[118] The Messiaen-like music in Weir's prelude not only alludes to non-Western idioms, but also reflects and reproduces an Orientalist understanding of non-Western music, whereby the non-West symbolizes a kind of timelessness. At the same time, however, the orchestral prelude ends with a treble-register, V–I tonal cadential gesture in E (mm. 14–17), the same pitch that functions as a pitch center throughout the orchestral prelude. Nevertheless, even though the prelude concludes in such a way that implies a V–I harmonic motion in E Major, the high register of the cadential gesture, as well as the sparse texture and muted timbre of its instrumentation, undermines any sense that the prelude is

[115] Messiaen's influence is also visible in the score's orthography, where Weir almost exclusively uses sharps to represent the "black keys." On Messiaen's use of sharps, see Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music* 4, *Music in the Early Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 232–33. On Messiaen's documented influence on Weir, see Colton, "The Female Exotic."
[116] Paul Griffiths, *Olivier Messiaen and the Music of Time* (London: Faber & Faber, 2012), 15. On Messiaen and Orientalism, see Jane F. Fulcher, "The Politics of Transcendence: Ideology in the Music of Messiaen in the 1930s," *Musical Quarterly* 86, no. 3 (Autumn 2002): 449–71; and Chou Wen-Chung, "Asian Concepts and Twentieth-Century Western Composers," *Musical Quarterly* 57, no. 2 (April 1971): 211–29.
[117] Richard Taruskin, "Sacred Entertainments," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 15, no. 2 (July 2003): 109–26; 121.
[118] Edward Said, *Musical Elaborations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 99.

fundamentally or primarily tonal. Weir's musical language here incorporates an orientalist musical representation of "the atemporal," as well as narrative, teleological elements of tonal music, yet it never fully settles on either. In this way, Weir's music in the outer scenes of the opera loosens its hold on any one, clearly identifiable musical idiom, despite—or because of—the way in which it alludes to several different musical styles that are never fully discernable as separable elements.[119] The music of the opera's outer acts makes claims to remaining unmarked by spatial (geographic) or ethnic categories or moorings.

In Act II and in the first scene of Act III, however, the effect of Weir's stylistic appropriation is very different. The cameo appearance of Marco Polo at the start of Act III recreates an operatic recitative that recalls examples of tenor recitatives from the international repertory of nineteenth-century Italian opera.[120] As well as the sudden change to Italian-language text, this section ("Introduction: Recitativo") invokes Italian recitative by using a vocal line that outlines major and minor triads, forms frequent cadences with accented appoggiaturas, sticks closely to the spoken rhythm of the text in a resolutely rhetorical manner, and alternates with the brief punctuations of orchestral music. Thus, Marco Polo's recitative is "heard in imaginary quotation marks," as Björn Heile writes in a different context;[121] its musical language exaggerates the features of a well-known idiom and contrasts with the soundworld of the rest of the opera.

By comparison, the "Performance of 'The Orphan of the Chao Family'" that makes up most of Act II attempts a much more approximate invocation of classical Chinese drama, but its

[119] See Uno Everett, "Intercultural Synthesis," 19.
[120] A well-known example is Radamès's Act I recitative in Verdi's *Aida* "Se quel guerrier io fossi!" (which prepares the aria "Celeste Aida").
[121] Björn Heile, "'Transcending Quotation': Cross-Cultural Musical Representation in Mauricio Kagel's *Die Stücke der Windrose für Salonorchester*," *Music Analysis* 23, no. 1 (March 2004): 57–85.

musical and dramatic language nevertheless demarcates it strongly from the rest of the opera. The final scene of the previous act (Act I, Scene 6) has already identified this section of the opera unambiguously as a diegetic performance; here, the Chinese elders (Old P'eng and the Nightwatchman) remark, indicating toward the direction of the forthcoming performance: "On the river plain, to the side of the hanging gardens, the actors will play for the final time: 'The Poor Orphan of the Chao Family.'"[122] For Act II, Weir reduces the performing forces substantially to just three singers (playing "parts") and a smaller orchestral ensemble of fourteen players drawn from the symphony orchestra. Whereas the text in the outer acts of the opera (Act I and III) is almost all sung, she further distinguishes the performance from the rest of the opera by setting the majority of the libretto of this section as spoken dialogue. In addition, she specifies for this section that there should be no scenery: the "scene and action [are] suggested by simple props and constant mime actions."[123] In these ways, the diegetic performance within the opera remains clearly separated from the surrounding opera, heard and seen in quotation marks.[124]

While "Chinese opera" is a broad English-language term covering hundreds of genres and styles of classical Chinese drama, Weir's musical-dramatic model in Act II is Beijing Opera (*jingju*, lit. "capital drama"; also called *jingxi*, lit. "capital theatre," and *guoju*, lit. "national drama"). Originally a regional type of Chinese drama, Beijing Opera quickly acceded to the status of Chinese national culture in the early twentieth century, a quintessential example, as

[122] Weir, *A Night at the Chinese Opera*, 87–88 (Act I, Scene 6, mm. 755–763).
[123] Weir, *A Night at the Chinese Opera*, vi.
[124] In *Unsung Voices*, Abbate argues that diegetic performance in opera "exists separated from the musical fabric surrounding it." Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 29.

Joshua Goldstein argues, of an "invented tradition."[125] While Weir's libretto for this section is made up of passages drawn practically word-for-word from Liu Jung-en's modern translation of *The Orphan of Zhao*, she does not make any further attempt to reconstruct any one particular Chinese dramatic text. This approach is arguably authentic in that there is no single "composer" or fixed musical "score" in classical Chinese drama, except in very recent works created since the late twentieth century. In Beijing Opera, as Elizabeth Wichmann explains:

> the musical system (*shengqiang xitong*, lit. "vocal melodic-passage system") is conceptualized as the source of vocal music… But no music for any passage of lyrics in any Beijing opera play is entirely fixed. Specific musical passages are to varying extents actually created by the singing performers themselves, both in rehearsal and in performance.[126]

Likewise, the music and dramaturgy that lies within Weir's musical and dramatic "quotation marks" in the diegetic performance invoke the much more general category of Beijing Opera or classical Chinese drama. The lack of props and a set recalls the typically bare stage of Beijing Opera performances.[127] Furthermore, Weir emphasizes in particular what Wichmann calls the "intimate ensemble" of the Beijing Opera orchestra by orchestrating this section mainly with one instrument to a line, as well as Beijing Opera's tendency only very rarely to use instrumental music without song or speech.[128]

In addition, Weir recreates the sound and dramatic function of percussion instruments that play an important role in Beijing Opera. Scenes in the "Performance of 'The Orphan of the Chao Family'" that feature the General Tu-an-Ku begin with large gong and cymbal strokes,

---

[125] Joshua Goldstein, *Drama Kings: Players and Publics in the Re-creation of Peking Opera, 1870–1937* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007). Also see Colin Mackerras, *Chinese Drama: A Historical Survey* (Beijing, China: New World Press, 1990).
[126] Elizabeth Wichmann, *Listening to Theatre: The Aural Dimensions of Beijing Opera* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991), 53.
[127] Colin Mackerras, *Peking Opera* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 38–39.
[128] Wichmann, *Listening to Theatre*, 2.

whereas Weir uses a smaller gong and smaller cymbals to accompany the appearance on stage of the Orphan of Chao.. This imitates the practice in Beijing Opera of connoting the presence of high-status male characters with the sound of the large gong and the presence of "elegant [and] refined" characters with the small gong.[129] Moreover, throughout the "Performance of 'The Orphan of the Chao Family,'" the substantial use of spoken rather than sung dialogue, and the slapstick comedy of subterfuge and disguise, allow ample opportunity to foreground a wide range of dramaturgical and theatrical techniques, emulating the more or less equal prioritization in Beijing Opera of the "four skills" of song (*chang*), speech (*nian*), dance and acting (*zuo*), and choreographed combat (*da*).[130]

"The Orphan of the Chao Family" comes to a premature and abrupt end, when an earthquake cuts short the performance (Act II, "Coda"). As the Solider hurriedly announces "reports of tremors in the earth" (in a sung, *recitativo accompagnato*-style declamation that breaks with the spoken dialogue in "The Orphan of the Chao Family"), Weir's stage directions instruct three Actors "suddenly drop their poses and look offstage." Here, the full orchestra returns with an ostinato figure comprised of alternating sonorities of minor triads with added sixths, the kind of rich, tonally derived harmonies that have been absent throughout Act II. The sudden disruption of the play emphasizes its status in the opera as diegetic performance

Moreover, this abrupt juxtaposition further denotes Weir's musical and dramatic language in the outer acts as seemingly unmarked by ethno-spatial connotations—a presumptively neutral background against which "Chinese opera" and Italian opera emerge in the

[129] Ashley Thorpe, "Only Joking? The Relationship between the Clown and Percussion in *Jingju*," *Asian Theatre Journal* 22, no. 2 (Fall 2005): 269–92.
[130] Wichmann, *Listening to Theatre*, 2.

work as examples of ethnically and geographically specific cultural idioms that are "heard in quotation marks."[131] With its shifting formal parameters and multiple stylistic reference points, Weir's music and drama in the outer acts makes claims of providing an innovative, flexible, contemporary environment within which yesterday's ethnically-specific traditions—classical Chinese drama and nineteenth-century Italian opera—can be arrayed and appreciated as particular emblems of a more insular cultural past. Thus, "The Orphan of the Chao Family" and Marco Polo's "recitativo" stand out in *Chinese Opera* as ossified exemplars of "Eastern" and "Western" civilizations, each hidebound to a rigid set of stylistic conventions that these scenes parody, while the remaining sections of Weir's opera aim to offer an empty postmodern position of universality from which to embrace a diverse range of cultural particularities.[132] Given the extensive history of Western translations and adaptations of *The Orphan of Zhao*, and given the way in which *Chinese Opera* focuses on Marco Polo as a famous European traveler to China in the thirteenth century, the opera's representation of "Eastern" and "Western" cultures as isolated traditions is especially ironic; the historical record of the last millennium, including specifically the historiographical text—Marco Polo's *Travels*—in Weir's libretto, reveals instead a series of cultural, economic and political relationships between China and Europe that the separation of Chinese and European cultural traditions in Weir's opera belies.

***

[131] Everett writes how, in a "strategy that has become increasingly popular since the 1960s… borrowed cultural elements are frequently placed in some kind of opposition to the primary musical texture in such a way that produces tension through juxtaposition." Everett, "Intercultural Synthesis," 18.
[132] Žižek writes about "multiculturalism" as an "empty global position [that] treats *each* local culture the way the colonizer treats colonized people—as 'natives' whose mores are to be carefully studied and 'respected.'" Žižek, "Multiculturalism," 44. Emphasis original.

Kent Opera's premiere of *A Night at the Chinese Opera* on July 8, 1987 was the headline event in the annual Cheltenham International Festival of Music.[133] "Judith Weir's new opera is simply brilliant," reported Paul Griffiths in *The Times* from the midst of the festival: "This is the debut of a very remarkable operatic composer."[134] Noting that Weir's score "promises enough treasures to satisfy many hearings," the music critic Andrew Clements found additional praise for Richard Jones's direction, Andrew Parrott's conducting, and all the vocal soloists; Kent Opera's production, he concluded, "seems successful at every level."[135] After two performances at the Everyman Theatre in Cheltenham on July 8 and 11, 1987, Kent Opera took *A Night at the Chinese Opera* on tour across southern England in September and October of that year with similarly positive reviews.[136]

The opera's reputation had grown further still by the end of the decade.[137] Kent Opera revived its production of the work in another series of performances in British theaters and concert halls in the summer and autumn of 1988. Kent Opera's performance in the Theatre Royal in Bath was broadcast nationally on BBC television on Saturday, November 26, 1988, helping Kent Opera's production to reach a wider audience and increasing Weir's profile with the British public.[138] In 1989, *Chinese Opera* was performed in the U.S. in a new production by Santa Fe Opera.[139] Summing up the performances of Weir's work that took place in Britain across the late

[133] Whitehouse, "Festivals."
[134] Griffiths, "Arts (Cheltenham Festival)."
[135] Clements, "Arts: A Chinese Night to Savour – Opera."
[136] David Harris, "Weir – *A Night at the Chinese Opera*," *Opera News* 54, no. 6 (December 1989): 65–66.
[137] Hartford, "Opera in Britain Today," 465.
[138] See Weir, "Memoirs of an Accidental Film Artist."
[139] [Editorial], "The Santa Fe Opera Announces 1989 Season," *New York Times*, November 20, 1988, 67.

1980s, one critic writing in 1990 maintained that *A Night at the Chinese Opera* should be recognized as one of the "highlights of 1980s opera."[140]

One feature of Kent Opera's performances in the late 1980s, and an important contribution to its critical and popular success, were the supplementary materials that Judith Weir produced specifically for this production. The first appeared three months before the premiere of *Chinese Opera* in *The Musical Times* as a short essay by Weir entitled "A Note on a Chinese Opera," in which she reflected on the artistic choices and principles that informed the new work.[141] Weir's essay became the basis for an extended program note for Kent Opera's production and a talk that Weir gave on BBC television directly preceding the BBC's televised broadcast of Kent Opera's performance, both of which reiterate most of the key points in her essay, often word for word.[142] Shot close up from the shoulders up, Weir's televised talk devoted over five minutes of national, Saturday-evening, primetime television broadcasting to Weir at a time when she was still relatively unknown, even among a British opera-going public. Prominently positioned as the author of all these supplementary materials for the Kent Opera production, Weir played a significant public role in shaping reading practices for her new opera.

Weir's "A Note on a Chinese Opera," and the reiteration of its main points in her program note and televised talk for Kent Opera's production, cohered with the liberal-multicultural prerogative to undertaking a personal quest for cultural difference. Weir's essay began by characterizing the study of Chinese culture as an ethical endeavor, one with the capacity to recognize Chinese contributions to human civilization: "One of the abiding principles

[140] Hartford, "Opera in Britain Today," 465.
[141] Judith Weir, "A Note on a Chinese Opera," *Musical Times* 128, no. 1733 (July 1987): 373–75.
[142] Footage of the BBC broadcast is available at the British Film Institute (BFI) National Archives, BFI Identifier 341105.

of the history of science," the opening sentence stated, "seems to be that the great products of Western technological genius (the compass, suspension bridge, iron foundry, to name but a few) were quietly invented by the Chinese a thousand years earlier."[143] Furthermore, it referred to Weir's "admiration" for classical Chinese drama, while at the same time acknowledging her outsider status in relation to Chinese culture.[144] It then recounted Weir's own investigations into the history and conventions of classical Chinese drama, by which she "began to read the Chinese musical plays of the Yuan dynasty" and availed herself of "historical information about late 13th-cenutry China." Rather than collapsing distinctions between different cultures, it promoted a pluralist conception of cultural difference, always from the point of view of expressing a desire for increasing diversity. As it narrated a personal discovery of non-Western cultural tradition, Weir's essay enjoined its readers to identify with her process of familiarization with classical Chinese drama and embark upon a similar course of self-directed study.

As it modeled a personal quest for cultural diversity, Weir's essay also offered an authoritative, authorial interpretation of *Chinese Opera* that identified the work as a source of knowledge about racialized culture. First, it disclosed that classical Chinese drama and the history of the Yuan-dynasty era formed the primary source materials for *A Night at the Chinese Opera*. For instance, it mentioned that *Chinese Opera* "use[s]… the stage features of Yuan drama… [and] make[s] use of the historical information about late 13th-century China which I had gathered."[145] Next, it aimed to serve as a repository of information by which knowledge about Chinese cultural may be gleaned from the opera. For example, the essay explained how

[143] Weir, "A Note on a Chinese Opera," 373.
[144] *Ibid*., 373.
[145] *Ibid*., 373.

classical Chinese drama features a "high degree of dramatic cogency," which it attributed to an "easy and rapid transition between speech and song" that is "helped by the declamatory style of acting." It also praised classical Chinese drama for its "almost complete lack of scenery," which, it added, "contrast[s]… with Western operatic traditions."[146] It then related details of the Mongolian military rule of China in the Yuan dynasty, the philological status of Yuan-dynasty plays as texts without surviving music, and the extensive history of translation and adaptation in the West of *The Orphan of Zhao*. Weir's essay marshaled knowledge about Chinese culture in order to distinguish classical Chinese drama from European opera in such a way that performed respect (or "admiration") for both "Eastern" and "Western" traditions, and it situated *Chinese Opera* as a starting point for its readers to become familiar with classical Chinese drama.

In this way, "A Note on a Chinese Opera" reproduced liberal-multicultural protocols that defined racialized culture as a means for information retrieval and represented a desire for diversity as an ethical endeavor, as well as liberal multiculturalism's trademark dissociation from the people, communities, and lives whom liberal multiculturalism supposes racialized culture can represent. Although Weir's essay briefly mentioned the existence of "Chinese opera troupes today" as feature of cultural life in contemporary China, its focus on classical Chinese drama as a source of knowledge about the lives of Chinese people meant that it could not account for the presence in 1980s Britain of a sizable and growing Chinese-born population. Neither could it account specifically for the consequences of a racialized service economy that, during this period, encouraged the dispersal of Chinese-born residents across the United Kingdom into low-

[146] *Ibid*., 373.

paid catering jobs in such a way that impeded their collective organization.[147] In this way, "A Note on a Chinese Opera" corresponds to the way in which, as Jodi Melamed has argued, liberal multiculturalism leaves "marginalized majorities of minoritized people… as much dematerialized as stigmatized… [i]solated and replaced with racialized cultural products."[148] It situated *Chinese Opera* as a source of knowledge about racialized culture, suggesting that its readers could read the opera as means to know and admire classical Chinese drama, while dissociating them from accountability to Chinese and Chinese-diasporic people.

In 1987, this particular interpretation of *Chinese Opera*—as an innovative repository of knowledge about Chinese culture—undergirded the Art Council's internal reviews of Kent Opera's premiere of the work. As the unpublished archives of the Arts Council show, in around 1986 the Council had developed and implemented a scheme for evaluating its client opera companies on a similar basis to the method for assessing opera performance proposed in the "Cost Effective Opera Subsidy" study that the Council had commissioned earlier in the 1980s.[149] Under the Council's new assessment scheme, Council members attended opera performances incognito and recorded a "score" of various elements of the performance, including the "production" (with subheads such as "set," "orchestra," "soloists," "chorus"), the "work," the "venue," and even the "audience."[150] Under this assessment scheme, Council members reviewed Kent Opera's performances of *Chinese Opera* several times in July, September, and October of 1987, before sharing their findings with the entire body of Arts Council members; the reviews

[147] Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain*, 37; 341. Also see David Parker, "The Chinese Takeaway and the Diasporic Habitus: Space, Time and Power Geometries," in *Un/Settled Multiculturalisms: Diasporas, Entanglements, 'Transruptions'*, ed. Barnor Hesse (London and New York: Zed Books, 2000), 73–95.
[148] Melamed, *Represent and Destroy*, 36–37.
[149] Graham, Norman, and Shearn, "Cost Effective Opera Subsidy"; see above.
[150] For example, see AACGB 50/335 Kent Opera, 3/9.

were kept confidential from client organizations such as Kent Opera. The archival documentation of these "confidential reports" tells us less about Weir's work or Kent Opera's production than about a particular reading practice that Council members brought to bear on the performances. While the Arts Council's reviews unanimously both praised Weir's new composition and its production by Kent Opera, they also cleaved to a decidedly earnest interpretation of the performances. Moreover, this interpretation adhered to liberal-multicultural protocols that valued cultural performance in terms of its edifying effects on its audience and its compatibility with a consumer economy.

Several Arts Council reviewers applauded what they felt was the relatively accessible form and style of Weir's composition. For example, one reviewer at Kent Opera's performance in London's Queen Elizabeth Hall on 28 September, 1987 reported that: "The device whereby the plot is told a second time ensures that everybody should be able to follow what's going on… The music is essentially tonal and every approachable, but it is not without integrity for being so." This reviewer also noted that the performance was "sold out," and that its audience comprised "a very middle class 'opera audience' as distinct from a 'new music' one."[151] Another reviewer writing form a performance in Cheltenham in July, 1987 suggested that, although "it can't be easy to make sense of Chinese chicanery in Cheltenham, with modern music. I thought Kent Opera made a considerable success of it."[152] For another reviewer in Cheltenham, the gratifying accessibility of Weir's work was mirrored in the reaction of the audience: "the large audience was very enthusiastic," he maintained.[153] New laws regarding the access of

[151] AACGB 50/335 Kent Opera, 3/9, n.p. Report signed by Dominic Barrington.
[152] AACGB 50/335 Kent Opera, 3/9, n.p. Report signed by Brian Young.
[153] AACGB 50/335 Kent Opera, 3/9, n.p. Report signed by Stephen Firth.

performance venues to those with physical disabilities led a third reviewer to add that among the audience there were "2 wheelchairs, 1 Parkinsonism, 1 cerebrovascular disease noted."[154] The Arts Council's assessment criteria asked the reviewers to comment on the audience in terms of "size/composition (any predominant groups)," reflecting the Council's recent liberal-multicultural approach to conceptualizing diversity within the context of cultural consumption.

In addition, many Arts Council reviewers maintained that Weir's new composition could provide a model for the rejuvenation of British opera in the contemporary era. One wrote that: "if Miss Weir can produce further ideas of this order, and music to match, the future is bright indeed—and we won't need to spend so much money on C19 [nineteenth-century] Italian productions."[155] Describing Weir's work as "something new in music theatre—a new concept," he suggested that works of a similar form and style to *Chinese Opera* could begin to replace older works in the international operatic repertory. Thus, this reviewer takes quite literally the opera's claim of yielding an updated, universal musical-dramatic language that would both embrace and supersede the particular cultural traditions of an earlier age, including specifically nineteenth-century Italian opera. Another reviewer noted in particular that the "Performance of 'The Orphan of the Chao Family'" in Act II "could have been gimmicky, but wasn't. It had the feel of a Chinese opera, with all the props lying around, or appearing out of the woodwork, and the singers appeared to be quite at ease."[156] In other words, this reviewer praised *Chinese Opera* for the way in which, in his view, it avoided the lure a more typical Orientalist rendition of

[154] AACGB 50/335 Kent Opera, 3/9, n.p. Report signed by R. A. Henson. Such a seemingly detailed official ethnography of British domestic space echoed the U.K. government's Mass Observation project of the mid-twentieth century. See Antony Robin Jeremy Kushner, *We Europeans? Mass-Observation, 'Race' and British Identity in the Twentieth Century* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004).
[155] AACGB 50/335 Kent Opera, 3/9, n.p. Report signed by R. A. Henson.
[156] AACGB 50/335 Kent Opera, 3/9, n.p. Report signed by Stephen Firth.

Chinese source material and instead presented a more authentic specimen of classical Chinese drama as a seemingly separate part of the opera. Likewise, one reviewer enthused about the opera's diverse variety of cultural references: "slapstick rubs shoulders with T'ai Chai [*sic*] and contemporary theatrical techniques, and in the music, pentatonic chinoiserie is succeeded by Verdian recitative! [*sic*]."[157]

These reviewers read *Chinese Opera* in terms of what they felt was its superiority over established works in the international operatic repertory and the way in which it seemed to posit a broad musical-theatrical frame within which representative fragments of the traditions of both European and Chinese cultural performance could circulate. According to these reviewers, the unique value of Weir's work lay in its potential to supersede ethnically defined culture with an embrace of several different cultural traditions. This reading practice defined *Chinese Opera* by the many different cultures it appeared to exhibit, rather than by analogy to any one tradition or style of cultural performance. Its protocols of respect for particular cultural traditions, self-edification through consumption, and maximizing the distribution of cultural production within the marketplace of the consumer economy reproduced liberal-multicultural priorities of diversity, respect, self-improvement, and the ubiquity of a neoliberal political economy.[158]

***

[157] *Ibid*.

[158] Žižek writes: "the problematic of multiculturalism—the hybrid existence of diverse cultural life-worlds—which imposes itself today is the form of appearance of its opposite, of the massive presence of capitalism as *universal* world system: it bears witness to the unprecedented homogenization of the contemporary world. It is effectively as if, since the horizon of social imagination no longer allows us to entertain the idea of an eventual demise of capitalism—since, as we might put it, everybody silently accepts that *capitalism is here to stay*—critical energy has found a substitute outlet in fighting for cultural differences which leave the basis homogeneity of the capitalist world-system intact." Žižek, "Multiculturalism," 46. Emphasis original.

Weir's *Chinese Opera* both fulfils and thwarts this promise to provide multicultural instruction. A close reading of one particular scene in the opera reveals how the work satirizes a dour official approach to Thatcherite cultural policy from the safe distance of "thirteenth-century China." Significantly, the "Performance of 'The Orphan of the Chao Family'" in Act II is not the only performance in the opera. A dramatic turning point in *Chinese Opera* takes place in the third scene of Act I, where a seven-year-old Chao Lin witnesses two simultaneous performances that each exemplify a different cultural tradition.[159] On one side of the stage, the Nightwatchman, a denizen of China before the time of the Mongolian invasion, methodically performs a Chinese "martial art," while the Soldier, a member of the occupying Mongolian military, rehearses a hasty series of combative "gestures" with his sword on the other side of the stage.[160] This scene forms one snapshot in the chronicle of scenes from Chao Lin's early life that comprise Act I. At this time, he is overseen by the Chinese elder Old P'eng, who attempts to teach the boy the Chinese martial art. During the course of the scene, the young Chao Lin becomes fascinated instead with the Soldier's "amour and weapons," thereby failing to heed Old P'eng's warning that such a fascination with the Soldier's performance will lead only to self-destruction. Voiced by Old P'eng, the message of this scene encourages the careful and respectful study of a different or unfamiliar cultural tradition, while also denouncing an unthinking adherence to any one culture. As such, it models a liberal-multicultural reading practice for the subsequent sections of the opera, especially performance of "The Orphan of the Chao Family" in Act II. In this way, this scene reaffirms the liberal-multicultural reading practice for *Chinese Opera* that Weir's

[159] As Marvin Carson suggests, performance typically "require[s] the physical presence of trained or skilled human beings whose demonstration of their skills is the performance" and is "always… *for* someone, some audience that recognizes and validates it as performance even when… that audience is the self." See Marvin Carson, *Performance: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1997), 3. Emphasis original.
[160] Weir, *A Night at the Chinese Opera*, 30; 31 (Act I, Scene 3, stage directions).

supplementary materials for Kent Opera's production also authorized, a reading practice that interprets the opera as an ethically valuable education in a different culture.

The scene stages an awkward counterpoint between fictionalized Chinese and Mongolian cultures. As the two performances unfold, Chao Lin's attention focuses on the Mongolian Soldier. In the orchestra, upper strings and tuned percussion provide a counterpoint to the action with a recklessly fast ostinato figure that highlights the Soldier's unsophisticated routine over the Nightwatchman's careful repose and preempts Chao Lin's attraction toward the former (mm. 369–410). Noticing this, the Chinese elder and scholar Old P'eng encourages Chao Lin instead toward the Nightwatchman's performance of Chinese martial arts. He hopes Chao Lin will "learn" and eventually "master" a different culture (m. 442; m. 422): "Let other races wield the sword," Old P'eng exhorts in a disparaging remark aimed squarely at the foreign Soldier, for "our mental strength is greater" (mm. 449–453). His melodic contour, with its short, triadic phrases and emphatic cadences of a descending perfect fifth, further highlights his determination to teach the boy Chinese culture. In contrast to the "brute" force of Mongolian culture (m. 434), Old P'eng explains, the Chinese martial art needs no recourse to violence. Instead, it employs the critical faculties of "the mind" (m. 459) in order to promote "calm and relaxation" (mm. 432–433), thereby ensuring not only the boy's "moral discipline" (mm. 439–441), but also the greater "peace" of Chinese society (m. 436). For Old P'eng, therefore, the careful study of a different culture forms a kind of self-edification that leads directly to social harmony: the study of an unfamiliar culture has a very predictable set of outcomes, all of which are beneficial to the individual and to society. By contrast, the Solider remains immersed within the Mongolian culture of sword-fighting: his is a performance of violence that rapidly converts to a violent reality.

This scene conveys Old P'eng's anxiety about cultural pedagogy, especially the kinds of pedagogical models and practices that allow young people to learn the conventions of a particular cultural tradition; and in the remainder of the scene, Old P'eng's fears are quickly realized. Chao Lin becomes increasingly fixated on the Soldier's performance and soon begins to imitate the gestures of the Soldier's sword-fighting routine. Finally, the boy seems compelled to follow the Solider off stage, leaving Old P'eng, the Nightwatchman and, by implication, the scholarly study of Chinese culture behind. Captivating Chao Lin's attention without the intermediary steps of practice and learning, this Mongolian culture encourages a direct form of identification that leads him to treat Chinese culture with intolerance and contempt. Its connotations of ethical deficiency or defectiveness (living by the sword, and the image it conjures up of "child soldiers") appear to stem from its collectively binding powers.[161] Unlike the Chinese martial art, the culture performed by the Mongolian solider is not a cultural tradition that Chao Lin chooses, but a culture that chooses him. Thus, this scene differentiates between the two cultural performances on the basis of their effects on the young Chao Lin, whose actions are presumed to betoken the health and solidity of Chinese society. According to this logic, the boy's failure to choose correctly between the two cultures—that is, to choose the only culture that is truly a choice—completes and compounds a cycle of violence that threatens to undermine social harmony. While Old P'eng exhorts that learning about a different culture—cultural pedagogy—will provide a sure road toward the good life, Chao Lin becomes a mindless adherent of a Mongolian culture of violence that leaves him ignorant of other cultural traditions. In this way,

[161] Wendy Brown argues that "liberalism" or liberal multiculturalism "presumes to convert culture's collectively binding powers, its shared and public qualities, into individual and privately lived choices." Brown, *Regulating Aversion*, 21.

Old P'eng rehearses liberal-multicultural protocols that retain a position of universality from which the proper appreciation of different cultures may commence and that conceptualize the self-directed study of a different culture as an ethical goal, as well as liberal-multicultural repertoires for condemning perceived antagonists by deeming them to be doomed by their own inflexible, monocultural, fixity.[162]

While this scene in Act I supports the liberal-multicultural reading practice for the opera authorized by Weir's essay, program note and televised talk about the opera, the final scene of *Chinese Opera* stages a clever twist on the theme of (multi)cultural pedagogy that satirizes liberal multiculturalism's all-too-earnest understanding of cultural performance. After watching the performance of "The Orphan of the Chao Family" in Act II, Chao Lin, now a young man of 21 years, is struck by what he perceives to be the many similarities between the play and his own life. He arrives at Chinese culture, then, much later than Old P'eng would have liked, but he nevertheless becomes intrigued by its charms. Following Old P'eng's lessons to the letter, Chao Lin takes the play extremely seriously; it contains a message, he believes, that will lead him to the good life. It is as if he wishes to make up for the years in which he remained a monocultural adherent of Mongolian militarism and disregarded other cultures. Interpreting the performance of "The Orphan of the Chao Family" as a prophesy, Chao Lin plots to assassinate the Mongolian Military Governor on account of the Governor's resemblance to the "wicked" General Tu-an-Ku in the play. Yet, his assassination attempt is foiled at the last minute, and he is sentenced to death for treason. Chao Lin's earnest interpretation of the play seems not to have paid off.

[162] On liberal-multicultural ascriptions of monoculturalism, see Melamed, *Represent and Destroy*, 138.

The final scene of the opera reveals that Chao Lin's decision to read the play as a guide to achieving the good life is not only tragic, but also profoundly ironic. After Chao Lin is led away, the three Actors resume "The Orphan of the Chao Family" at the point in the play at which the earthquake had interrupted their performance earlier. Yet, the scene they perform diverges sharply from Chao Lin's life; it portrays the Orphan of Chao's victory over the General Tu-an-Ku and the Emperor's reward to the Orphan for killing the villainous General. In other words, the play in fact provided no blueprint for action nor any guidance on sustaining the good life. Old P'eng's earnest advice to study Chinese culture in pursuit of social harmony proves to be of limited application and indeed a dangerous proposition when, as in the case of Chao Lin, the advice is taken too far. Thus, the final scene of *Chinese Opera* preserves an ironic role for cultural performance, a role that does not simply read performance as valuable solely in terms of edification and instruction but instead questions altogether the use-value of cultural performance for social reproduction. As a subtle commentary on liberal multiculturalism, then, Weir's opera satirizes the liberal-multicultural prerogative to see cultural production simply as a means to acquire knowledge and to foster values of respect and social harmony. Cultural performance, as *Chinese Opera* demonstrates, exceeds definition as a literal document and escapes the grasp of a governmentality that situates culture as an instrument of edification. While the Chinese elder Old P'eng remains convinced that learning about an unfamiliar cultural tradition will steer Chao Lin onto a path that leads toward a peaceful society, Chao Lin's guileless application of Old P'eng's teaching remonstrates against a liberal-multicultural reading practice that situates the reception of cultural production as a necessarily ethical act. In this way, *Chinese Opera* established a role for opera within the strictures of official multiculturalism in 1980s Britain. Rather than reproducing claims that the rise of multiculturalism had rendered British opera a beleaguered

institution, *A Night at the Chinese Opera* responded to the challenge of rehabilitating opera within liberal-multicultural protocols for public culture. Yet, it does so not only by re-imagining operatic tradition as global in reach and racially inclusive, but also by satirizing the tendency of British official multiculturalism to treat opera as the object of dour suspicion.

By examining the changing role of opera in 1980s British cultural policy, this chapter has analyzed British official multiculturalism as a mode of governmentality that secured the conditions for privatization and impeded a more radical redistribution of public resources to people of color. Rather than describe multicultural governmentality as a successful decolonization of the margins, this chapter has insisted that official multiculturalism in 1980s Britain was a discourse of the center. This view contrasts with an understanding of multicultural frameworks as offering redress for marginalization, though it does not deny that certain revaluations of the margins have been among multiculturalism's significant effects; as Eddie Chambers has argued recently, the idea that the Arts Council's introduction multicultural policies represented an unqualified success for people of color "reflect[s] a profound *not knowing*—not knowing the full extent of what happened in the 1980s and not knowing about what preceded the 1980s."[163] One task of this chapter, therefore, has been to challenge what has been called the "discourse of beleaguerment" that took root in the 1980s among the Arts Council's long-established "fine arts" clients—opera, ballet, symphonic music and Shakespearean theatre—toward which Keynes had originally tailored the Arts Council.[164] As funding for the arts began to tilt toward people of color, those involved in the "fine arts" perceived a worrying reversal of

[163] Eddie Chambers, *Things Done Change: The Cultural Politics of Recent Black Artists in Britain* (Amsterdam: Ropoi, 2012), 2.
[164] See Bennett, "Cultural Policy in the United Kingdom," 199–216.

their fortunes. Several opera companies funded by the Arts Council faced not only redoubled scrutiny, but also cuts to their government grants-in-aid that seemed to threaten the future of state-sponsored opera in Britain. Despite the deep feelings of resentment and denial this generated, the more remarkable aspect of Thatcherite multiculturalism in Britain is opera's hale, if not quite hearty survival.

CHAPTER THREE

PERFORMING BLACK BRITISH HISTORY IN POSTRACIAL TIMES

"Since the mid-1990s," writes Eva Ulrike Pirker in her 2011 study *Narrative Projections of a Black British History*, "the negotiation of the black experience in Britain has emerged in the wider public arena."[1] She explains how during this period the writing or narrating of black British history has increasingly taken place within the cultural mainstream or center-ground of public life.[2] Examples of this emergence might include exhibitions in major museums, municipal events to commemorate the transatlantic slave trade and its abolition, the incorporation of a "Black History Month" in educational curricula, and documentary programming on national television and radio, among many others. Coinciding roughly with the period since the "landslide" electoral victory of the center-left New Labour U.K. government in 1997 (with its heady promises to embrace a "new," "multicultural" Britain), this is a time, Pirker argues, in which black history has been transformed from being the preserve of "a small circle of researchers" into a "new and celebrated… [part of] British history and heritage culture."[3] Although Pirker's own historiography of what she calls "the long and difficult road to this point" almost entirely ignores the efforts and insights of community and activist historians of black Britain working outside professional academia, her analysis of the ways in which black British history "functions within the [U.K.] national context" remains valuable for understanding relationships between state power, national identity, and the constructing of black history in

[1] Eva Ulrike Pirker, *Narrative Projections of a Black British History* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 4.
[2] *Ibid*., 5–27.
[3] *Ibid*., 4–5. On the role of racial representation in constructing "New Britain" in the late 1990s, see Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, *Imagining the New Britain* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2000).

twenty-first-century Britain.[4] As Pirker astutely asks: If "[b]lack history has… become a subject matter that can be transported comfortably via mainstream cultural enunciations... what are the costs?"[5]

As a case study of the ways in which black history comes to inhabit the cultural and institutional center of contemporary (twenty-first-century) Britain, this chapter discusses a series of public events in 2012 that were designed to mark the centenary of the death of the black British composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875–1912). Coleridge-Taylor rose to recognition at the turn of the twentieth century as one of the most popular and critically acclaimed British composers. As well as enjoying the support of establishment figures such as Edward Elgar, George Grove, and U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt, Coleridge-Taylor also participated centrally in a Pan-African political culture that emerged in London in the closing years of nineteenth century and that involved black intellectuals from across the African diaspora. His death at age 37 in 1912 was seen as a tragedy for British musical life,[6] while the black American writer and educator W.E.B. Du Bois, who was a leading figure in this Pan-African movement and a close associate of Coleridge-Taylor, eulogized him in 1920 as a "hero" and as "one of the most notable English composers."[7] Yet, despite the renown that he achieved during this lifetime,

---

[4] Pirker, *Narrative Projections*, 5. Pirker briefly mentions the Black Cultural Archives in Brixton, London, which she acknowledges "began as a community history project in the 1970s." Pirker, *ibid*., 52. On black British history writing in sites outside academia, see Ziggi Alexander, "Let It Lie Upon the Table: The Status of Black Women's Biography in the UK," *Gender & History* 2, no. 2 (March 1990): 22–33; and Paul Warmington, *Black British Intellectuals and Education: Multiculturalism's Hidden History* (New York: Routledge, 2014). Another useful history of the scholarship of black British history is given in Anne Rush, "Reshaping British History: The Historiography of West Indians in Britain in the Twentieth Century," *History Compass* 5, no. 2 (March 2007): 463–84. One need only think of iconoclastic aspirations of Peter Fryer's monumental 1984 study *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain*, which begins with Roman Britain and, over 400 pages, arduously battles forward to the post-World War Two era.

[5] Pirker, *Narrative Projections*, 16.

[6] Jeffrey Green, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor: A Musical Life* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011), 1.

[7] W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Immortal Child," in *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil* (1920), http://www.gutenberg.org/files/15210/15210-h/15210-h.htm.

after his death his status as a cultural icon was largely relegated to that of a historical footnote, remembered, if at all, for his cantata trilogy *The Song of Hiawatha*, which virtually disappeared from the repertory within a decade or so of his death.[8] In the words of a rare book-length study of his music from 1994, Coleridge-Taylor had become a "much the forgotten composer and for the most part little known."[9] The events of the Coleridge-Taylor centenary of 2012 were therefore framed as an effort to restore the composer's legacy, to grant his works a place at the center of contemporary British cultural life, and to publicize the "forgotten" history of a black Briton of the late-Victorian and Edwardian periods.

Organized as part of the 2012 Coleridge-Taylor centenary, the world premiere of his opera *Thelma* served aptly as the centerpiece of these events. After Coleridge-Taylor completed the work in 1909, *Thelma* was considered lost for almost a century. Coleridge-Taylor's only opera would wait until 2003, when an autograph manuscript of the full score was discovered in the archives of the British Library. After this archival discovery, a performing edition of *Thelma* was completed in time for the professional opera company Surrey Opera to mount a production of the work in conjunction with the 2012 Coleridge-Taylor centenary.[10] As the highlight of an extensive series of commemorative events that year, Surrey Opera's production—performed in a run of three public performances in London suburb of Croydon in February 2012—was widely hailed in Britain as a historic event of national cultural importance. While claims of "restoring" Coleridge-Taylor's "forgotten" legacy characterized the centenary events, a rhetoric of historical

[8] Jeffrey Green, "Requiem: 'Hiawatha' in the 1920s and 1930s," *Black Music Research Journal* 21, no. 2 (Autumn 2001): 283–88. Also see Hilary Burrage, "Memories of Hiawatha in the Royal Albert Hall," Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Foundation blog, https://sctf.org.uk/2012/05/25/memories-of-hiawatha-in-the-royal-albert-hall/.
[9] Jewel Taylor Thompson, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor: The Development of His Compositional Style* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1994), ix.
[10] Catherine Carr, "The Music of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875–1912): A Critical and Analytical Study" (Ph.D. dissertation: University of Durham, 2005).

reclamation could be employed even more confidently in the case of *Thelma*'s world premiere, seeing as the work had remained almost entirely unknown—and certainly unperformed—since its composition in 1909. Furthermore, the revelation that Coleridge-Taylor's *oeuvre* included a full-length opera lent support to arguments that he should be remembered as a major figure in British music history.

Focusing on *Thelma* and its premiere production by Surrey Opera, this chapter situates the 2012 Coleridge-Taylor centenary as instructive of how black history can inhabit the cultural and institutional center in twenty-first-century Britain, as well as the "costs" that are incurred when black British history becomes the subject of "mainstream cultural enunciations." The chapter begins by introducing *Thelma*. I explain how the work's Wagnerian aspirations responded to a widely perceived deficit of homegrown British operas in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries—or what a famous pamphlet of 1902 referred to in avowedly Wagnerian terms as "the operatic problem" of Edwardian England that would only be solved by the successful creation of "the English opera of the future."[11] I then recount the Coleridge-Taylor centenary commemorations in 2012, which featured Surrey Opera's production of *Thelma*. As I will argue, the events of the Coleridge-Taylor centenary, and especially the premiere of *Thelma*, illustrate the emergence of black British history within the British cultural mainstream. While the centenary drew attention to Coleridge-Taylor as a black figure in British history, it nevertheless minimized the racial dimensions of Coleridge-Taylor's biography and musical works. In doing so, I argue, the premiere of *Thelma* adhered to an ideology of postracialism, the idea that "race is

[11] See Paul Rodmell, *Opera in the British Isles, 1875–1918* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 185–220.

no longer relevant" in twenty-first-century Britain.[12] While the 1980s and 1990s in Britain witnessed the rise of liberal multiculturalism with its powerful assertions of a "multicultural present" even in the face of increasing inequality of racial outcomes (see Chapter 2), official and hegemonic representations of British national identity now expand to include assertions of a British multicultural past.[13]

Next, this chapter turns to the history of race that shaped Coleridge-Taylor's preoccupation with composing a self-consciously Wagnerian opera. Piecing together some of *Thelma*'s influences in the work of Du Bois, with whom Coleridge-Taylor was well acquainted, this section reconstructs an early-twentieth-century discourse of black internationalism that I refer to as "Afro-Wagnerism." Drawing on recent scholarly work on Afrofuturism, I read Du Bois's writings and his interlocutions with Coleridge-Taylor as a particularly rich archive of a black-diasporic reception of Wagner's "fantastical" operatic world-making. I connect my discussion of Afro-Wagnerism to recent reassessments of race in Wagner's works and legacy by musicologists such as Lawrence Kramer, Alex Ross, and Gary Tomlinson as well as other cultural historians and German studies scholars.[14] As I argue, the history of Du Bois's and Coleridge-Taylor's Afro-Wagnerism offers a kind of "countermemory" that interrupts the

---

[12] Nisha Kapoor, Virinder S. Kalra, and James Rhodes, Introduction to *The State of Race* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) […], 5. Also see Victoria Redclift, "New Racisms, New Racial Subjects? The Neo-Liberal Moment and the Racial Landscape of Contemporary Britain," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 37, no. 4 (2014): 577–88; and Heidi Safia Mirza, "'Harvesting Our Collective Intelligence': Black British Feminism in Post-Race Times," *Women's Studies International Forum* 51 (2015): 1–9.

[13] See Roshi Naidoo and Jo Littler, "White Past, Multicultural Present: Heritage and National Stories," in *History, Identity and the Question of Britain*, eds. Robert Philips and Helen Brocklehurst (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 330–41.

[14] See Lawrence Kramer, "The *Lohengrin* Prelude and Anti-Anti-Semitism," *19th-Century Music* 25, nos. 2–3 (Fall/Spring 2001–2002): 190–211; Alex Ross, "Black Wagner," *The Rest Is Noise* (online) <http://www.therestisnoise.com/2013/01/black-wagner-and-the-rest-is-noise.html>; Gary Tomlinson, "Parahuman Wagnerism," *Opera Quarterly* 29, nos. 3–4 (Summer–Autumn 2013): 186–202; Kira Thurman, "Black Venus, White Bayreuth: Race, Sexuality, and the Depoliticization of Wagner in Postwar Germany," *German Studies Review* 35, no. 3 (October 2014): 607–26; and Alexander G. Weheliye, "The Grooves of Temporality," *Public Culture* 17, no. 2 (2005): 319–38.

mainstream, "aseptic" historiography of Coleridge-Taylor that prevailed throughout his centenary events in Britain in 2012.[15] In other words, Afro-Wagnerism helps identify "race" in operatic texts and contexts in which blackness is conspicuously dismissed.[16] By way of conclusion, the final section of this chapter proposes Afro-Wagnerism as a way to (re)read *Thelma* and its premiere in 2012. If, as Paul Taylor has suggested, post-racial times attempt to effect a "distance between a somehow complete past and a still-unfolding present" but in fact remain "dependen[t] on the past to find… meaning," the Coleridge-Taylor centenary and the historical event of *Thelma*'s first performances help reveal postracialism's conflicted relationship with black history.[17]

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor in Imperial London

Coleridge-Taylor was born in 1875 in London. His father, Daniel Peter Hughes Taylor, was a black middle-class Sierra Leonean, who, according to Jeffery Green's recent biography of the composer, had left the British colony of Sierra Leone in 1869 to study medicine, first in Taunton in the west of England and then at King's College Hospital in London. Coleridge-Taylor's father qualified as a member of the Royal College of Surgeons in November 1874, but returned to Sierra Leone shortly after in 1875, apparently never to return to Britain and perhaps without any knowledge that he was to father a child. Presumably, Dr. Taylor had met Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's white British mother, Alice Taylor (formerly Holmans), while living near King's

[15] *Countermemory* is Foucault's term of "a use of history that severs its connection to memory." Quoted in Stuart Hall, "Whose Heritage? Un-Settling 'The Heritage,' Re-Imagining the Post-Nation," *Third Text* 49 (Winter 1999–2000): 26.
[16] This formulation is indebted to Tavia Nyong'o, "Punk'd Theory," *Social Text* 84–85, nos. 3–4 (Fall–Winter 2005): 20–34; 24.
[17] Paul C. Taylor, "After Race, After Justice, After History," *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 47 (2009): 25–41.

College Hospital; The child's birth was registered at 15 Theobald's Road, where Alice lived with her father, a blacksmith, not far from where Dr. Taylor had studied medicine. There is no record of any marriage between Alice and Dr. Taylor; while she used Dr. Taylor's last name, her choice of name for her baby must also have been a homage to the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834), and there is no indication that either she or her son had any contact with Dr. Taylor after he returned to Sierra Leone in 1875. In 1877, Alice moved with her baby, her father, and her stepmother to the southeast London suburb of Croydon, where they all shared a home. Samuel Coleridge-Taylor would live in Croydon his entire life.

His musical education began at a young age with violin lessons from his maternal grandfather, who was an amateur musician. He was later a boy chorister at different Anglican churches in Croydon and took piano and music theory lessons. In 1890, when Coleridge-Taylor was fifteen, he began studies at the Royal College of Music, after his former choirmaster in Croydon had personally recommended him to the College's head, Sir George Grove, and he had received a scholarship that fully covered his tuition fees. (That Coleridge-Taylor found favor with Grove in this way was, as Green speculates, perhaps in part due to the fact that Grove's early career as a lighthouse engineer in the West Indies led him to develop an interest in black music.)[18] At the Royal College, he first studied violin and piano, later changing his first study to composition and taking composition lessons with Charles Villiers Stanford. In the early 1890s, he began to present concerts featuring his own compositions—mainly chamber works performed by his colleagues at the College. By 1895, Novello had published several of his works, and the

[18] *Ibid*., 25.

Musical Times noted in its August edition of that year that Coleridge-Taylor was "one of the most promising students of composition at present at the Royal College of Music."[19]

As his time at the Royal College of Music came to an end in 1897, Coleridge-Taylor began to develop personal, artistic and intellectual connections with the culture and politics of black America. At age 22, he had probably interacted closely with very few, if any black people, even though, according to his early biographer W.C. Berwick Sayers, others identified him from any early age as "dark-skinned," a "blackie," or a "negro," and his mother likely told him during his early childhood of his black African father.[20] Yet, by the 1890s, he could speak highly of the famous African-American choir the Fisk Jubilee Singers, whose concerts in London he reportedly attended at this time.[21] He must also have been aware of the highly popular minstrel shows, often very loosely based on *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and sometimes advertised as starring "ex slaves,"[22] that toured Britain in the 1880s, 1890s and the first decade of the twentieth century.[23] In the spring of 1897, he came into contact with the black American poet Laurence Dunbar and

---

[19] Green, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor*, 33.

[20] W.C. Berwick Sayers, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor – Musician: His Life and Letters*, 2nd ed. (London: Augener, 1927), 7. For example, Henry Downing recalls that the parents of Jessie Walmisley, who would become Coleridge-Taylor's wife in 1899, strongly disapproved of their daughter marrying a "blackie." Quoted in Green, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor*, 53. Green also relates how August Johannes Jaeger, a representative of the music publishing hose Novello who did a great deal to promote Samuel Coleridge-Taylor in the 1890s, wrote to Edward Elgar in September 1897: "The other 'coming man' is Coleridge-Taylor, the young nigger (He is only *21*!)…He is a genius I feel sure." Green, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor*, 54.

[21] This would have been the group's second formation under the new director Frederick J. Loudin following their tours of Europe in the mid-1870s and disbandment in 1878. According to Sayers, Coleridge-Taylor spoke of Loudin as "the world-renowned and deeply lamented Frederick J. Loudin, manager of the famous Jubilee Singers, through whom I first learned to appreciate the beautiful folk-music of my race, and who did much to make it known the world over." Berwick Sayers, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor*, 256.

[22] Green, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor*, 44; n237.

[23] Sayers relates a comic tale of Coleridge-Taylor's testimony (in a letter of August 1912) to the relationship between imperialist racial stereotypes on the Edwardian British stage and the everyday orientalism of white Britons: "Three years ago [i.e. in around 1909] I went to Hastings… Everybody was most kind and interested. I found out soon afterwards that 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' was in the town. I got out by the next train. Last Thursday, at the same town, there was similar interest in my doings. I wondered why. It was the 'Maoris—straight from the hot springs of New Zealand' [that was playing at a local theater at the time]. And I must say I do look like a Maori—fine, handsome fellows as you know they are." Berwick Sayers, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor*, 258.

the black American writer Henry Downing, both of whom were in London. This meeting proved to be life changing for Coleridge-Taylor.[24] With Dunbar, he immediately began a series of artistic collaborations, which included public performances of Coleridge-Taylor's music and Dunbar's poetry, as well as the song cycle *African Romances* and the ballad-opera *Dream Lovers* (first performed in Croydon in 1898), for which in both cases Dunbar provided the text.[25] From Downing, Coleridge-Taylor learned about the life of black Americans and was apparently introduced to several other black Americans, including living in or visiting London.[26] In the musical press and in Coleridge-Taylor's own words from this time, his music was often compared (favorably) to that of Dvořák and, to a lesser extent, Brahms. Many reviews and reports of his music also focused on what one London critic in 1898 referred to as the "distinctly racial character" of his music.[27] This was especially a feature of reviews of his music when critics discussed pieces—such as *African Romances* (seven songs that set Dunbar's words) of 1897 (Op. 17) and "Danse Négre" (originally for piano [Op. 21, No. 3]), and later included in the *African Suite* [Op. 35]) of 1898—that made it possible for critics to draw connections between Coleridge-Taylor's compositions and black racial identity based solely on the work's title.

---

[24] Nevertheless, as Green documents, Coleridge-Taylor already had contacts with the British newspaper the *African Times* before he met Dunbar and Downing. Green, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor*, 89–92.

[25] As Green writes: "On December 16, 1898… *Dream Lovers*… received its first performance in Croydon under the direction of Coleridge-Taylor… The second half consisted of the operetta, which was set in Madagascar and features four actors as the Mulatto prince Torado, his friend, a quadroon lady, and her sister…. That two black people had collaborated on the play, to write of Africa, is symbolic of the entry of Africa in to the composer's life… It seems that the composer was taking more than a solely musical role in presenting Dunbar's one-act drama; the four actors also seem to have been black." Jeffrey Green, "'The Foremost Musician of His Race': Samuel Coleridge-Taylor of England, 1875–1912," *Black Music Research Journal* 10, no. 2 (Autumn, 1990): 236. Despite his connection with Coleridge-Taylor, Dunbar makes no mention of the composer in his 1897 essay "England as Seen by a Black Man." Paul Laurence Dunbar, *In His Own Voice: The Dramatic and Other Uncollected Works of Paul Laurence Dunbar*, eds. Herbert Woodward Martin and Ronald Primeau (Athens: University of Ohio Press, 2002), 176–80.

[26] Green, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor*, 43.

[27] Green, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor*, 44.

Coleridge-Taylor's most famous work—during his lifetime and since—stems from this period. *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*, a cantata for tenor soloist, chorus and orchestra that sets the words of Henry Longfellow's epic poem *The Song of Hiawatha* was first performed with intense anticipation and to great popular and critical acclaim in November 1898 at the Royal College of Music. Coleridge-Taylor was soon commissioned to add two sequel cantatas to *Wedding Feast*; these followed as *The Death of Minnehaha* (1899) and *Hiawatha's Departure* (1900), and the whole trilogy had its first complete performance at the Royal Albert Hall in 1900 under the title *The Song of Hiawatha*. Longfellow's poetry was well-known in late-Victorian Britain among the middle classes, especially in terms of a wider concern or "sympathy" among middle-class Britons in the latter third of the nineteenth century with what they knew of the plight of Native Americans.[28] Other composers had achieved some critical and popular success with setting his texts in new works (such as Edward Elgar's cantata *Scenes from the Saga of King Olaf*, Op. 30, published by Novello in 1896).[29] Coleridge-Taylor was also increasingly in demand as a conductor for large amateur choirs and as an adjudicator for prestigious amateur music festivals."[30]

In 1900, Coleridge-Taylor's horizons began to expand even further. Early in that year, he was invited to participate as a member of London delegation at the first Pan-African Conference, which was held in Westminster Town Hall on 23–25 July 1900. Marking the beginning of the Pan-African movement in the twentieth century and the climax of years of anti-imperialist and

[28] See Geoffrey Self, *The Hiawatha Man: The Life and Work of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor* (Aldershot, UK: Scholars' Press, 1995), 69–70.
[29] On Elgar's success with *King Olaf*, see Jeremy Dibble, "Elgar and His British Contemporaries," in *The Cambridge Companion to Edward Elgar*, eds. Daniel Grimley and Julian Rushton (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 15–23; 19.
[30] Green, "The Foremost Musician of His Race," 233–52; 239.

abolitionist organizing, the Conference included discussions of lynching and racial discrimination in the U.S., the conditions of black workers in British colonies such as South Africa, and Britain's continued imperialist incursions in west Africa.[31] The forty or so participants in the Conference came from Britain, the U.S., the West Indies, and Africa; many of them had had decidedly cosmopolitan careers and experiences. Among them was Henry Downing, whom Coleridge-Taylor already knew, as well as the director of the Fisk Jubilee Singers, Frederick Loudin, and his wife; the American educators Anna Jones and Anna Julia Cooper; and W. E. B. Du Bois, who was then employed at the American Negro Exhibit in the Exposition Universelle in Paris. Coleridge-Taylor arranged musical entertainments for the Conference. The event allowed him to meet an informed group of black men and women from around the world; he would maintain a friendship with Du Bois for the rest of his life.

Beginning around the time of the Pan-African Conference, Coleridge-Taylor also made a significant impression on several black American thinkers, leaders and musicians. These included Mamie Hilyer, an influential member of Washington D.C.'s black elite, who in 1903 helped to found the Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Choral Society, dedicated to performing his works.[32] The Society first performed *The Song of Hiawatha* in Baltimore in November 1903, with a choir of around 175 mainly black singers. (The first cantata in the trilogy, *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*, had already been performed in the U.S. many times, and the full trilogy, *The Song of Hiawatha*, had also been performed.)[33] The next year, the African-American educator and writer Booker T. Washington began writing the introduction to Coleridge-Taylor's *Twenty-*

[31] Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 203–204.
[32] See Jacqueline M. Moore, *Leading the Race: The Transformation of the Black Elite in the Nation's Capital, 1880–1920* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1999).
[33] Green, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor*, 128.

Four Negro Melodies for piano (Op. 59; published 1905), in which he famously described Coleridge-Taylor as "the foremost musician of his race" and "an inspiration to the Negro, since he himself, the child of an African father, is an embodiment of what are the possibilities of the Negro under favorable circumstances."[34] Coleridge-Taylor could now afford a ticket to visit the U.S., where he was greeted by a crowd on his arrival in Boston on 2 November 1904. A larger chorus of the Coleridge-Taylor Choral Society, accompanied this time by the United State Marine Corps orchestra, performed *Song of Hiawatha* to an audience of 3,000 with the composer in attendance; reviews in the London music press praised the performance. Coleridge-Taylor was received by President Theodore Roosevelt in the White House and left with an autographed photograph.[35] This would be the first of three trips the composer made to the U.S., an indication, too, of his increasing prominence in Britain. Coleridge-Taylor's sudden death on 1 September 1912 from pneumonia was marked as a tragedy for British musical life.[36]

Coleridge-Taylor and "the English Opera of the Future"

Coleridge-Taylor composed his only full-length opera *The Amulet* (retitled *Thelma*) during an increasingly busy period of his life, and from 1907 to 1909 his work was occupied almost exclusively with the composition of the score. As Sayers recalls, *Thelma* was "the centre of his interest" for this time, and he worked on it "constantly, and revising to a bewildering extent;

[34] Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, *Twenty-Four Negro Melodies* (Boston, MA: Oliver Ditson, 1905), vii–ix.
[35] Green, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor*, 132.
[36] *Ibid*., 1; 205–11. Also see Herbert Antcliffe, "Some Notes on Coleridge-Taylor," *Musical Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (April, 1922): 180–92. The *Crisis*, founded by W.E.B. Du Bois and the "official" journal of the U.S. black rights organization the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples, noted in 1912 that "[t]he sad news of Mr. Coleridge-Taylor's death cast gloom over the opening of the Royal Eisteddfod of Wales." https://www.marxists.org/history/usa/workers/civil-rights/crisis/1200-crisis-v05n02-w026.pdf

whole scenes were written and re-written in entirely new forms again and again."[37] Although he was committed to using an English-language libretto for his new work, Coleridge-Taylor would not attempt to copy the successful "light" operas of Gilbert and Sullivan, for which William Schwenck "W.S." Gilbert's English-language libretti were so integral. Instead, Coleridge-Taylor would seek to work within a broad continental European (German and Italian) tradition of grand opera. Whereas Gilbert and Sullivan's operas were performed as a "run" (of dozens if not more than a hundred more or less consecutive performances with rotating casts at the same theater), *Thelma* was envisioned from the start as a piece that would join the "repertory" of a professional opera company.[38] Moreover, Coleridge-Taylor's own libretto for *Thelma* was designed to be entirely sung, in the manner of German and Italian grand opera by Wagner and Puccini. (Coleridge-Taylor's decision to set his entire libretto to music contrasted with his approach to text-setting in his earlier one-act "operatic romance" *Dream Lovers* of 1898, a collaboration with Dunbar; like "Gilbert and Sullivan" operas and many other "light" operas of the late-nineteenth century, *Dream Lovers* left the majority of Dunbar's text to be spoken rather than set to music.[39]) Rather than featuring set pieces that could easily be excerpted as solos, *Thelma* adopted a through-composed conception of text and song. Coleridge-Taylor's opera represented a very ambitious project.

---

[37] Sayers recalls that *Thelma* was "the centre of his interest" and that he worked on it "constantly, and revising to a bewildering extent; whole scenes were written and re-written in entirely new forms again and again." Quoted in Green, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor*, 155.

[38] The D'Oyly Carte Opera Company produced a series of highly popular works by the composer Arthur Sullivan and librettist W.S. Gilbert at the purpose-built Savoy Theatre in London, but comic or "light" operas such as these were never included within an international repertory of German and Italian works. See Rodmell, *Opera in the British Isles*.

[39] See Samuel Coleridge-Taylor and Paul Laurence Dunbar, *Dream Lovers: An Operatic Romance* (London and New York: Boosey, 1898). I wish to thank the Library Company of Philadelphia (LCP) for making a PDF of the score available to me. Stable URL to the item in the LCP catalogue: <http://dc02kg0540na.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com:48992/F?func=direct&doc_number=000020098>.

Coleridge-Taylor had good reason to see the composition of *Thelma* as a major challenge. Professional productions of serious operas by British composers were extremely rare in the late nineteenth century, and by the early twentieth century professional opera production in Britain was dominated by works by Puccini, Verdi, and Wagner. Nevertheless, during the same period there was also frequent talk of finding a British composer capable of writing an opera that could somehow found an as-yet-nonexistent tradition of British opera composition. While public discussion of what was referred to more than once in avowedly Wagnerian terms as "the English opera of the future" had been ongoing for decades, this had been amplified by the publication in London of a pamphlet entitled "The Operatic Problem" by the politician and businessman William Galloway in 1902.[40]

While the view among the British cultural elite of Gilbert and Sullivan operas became increasingly negative during the late nineteenth-century, the rising popularity of Wagner's operas in London during the 1880s and 1890s had made it possible to conceive of the solution to Britain's "operatic problem" in terms of a British Wagnerism.[41] As Paul Rodmell argues, "the perception that Britain had allowed its musical cultural to be dominated by foreigners to its own disadvantage was frequently reiterated during the late nineteenth century… [I]n no area was this felt more strongly and demonstrated more easily than in relation to opera."[42] While the establishment of a British tradition of opera composition was seen as a panacea for Britain's

[40] See Rodmell, *Opera in the British Isles*.
[41] On the declining popularity of Gilbert and Sullivan in the late nineteenth century, see Benedict Taylor, "Sullivan, Scott and *Ivanhoe*: Constructing Historical Time and National Identity in Victorian Opera," *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 9 (2012): 295–321. On the reception of Wagner in late nineteenth-century Britain, see Emma Sutton, *Aubrey Beardsley and British Wagnerism in the 1880s* (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 2002); Janice Henson, "Bernard Shaw's Contribution to the Wagner Controversy in England," *The Shaw Review* 4, no. 1 (January 1961): 21–26; and William Blissett, "Ernest Newman and English Wagnerism," *Music & Letters* 40, no. 4 (October 1959): 311–23.
[42] Rodmell, *Opera in the British Isles*, 194.

"operatic problem" in the early twentieth century, this created an enticing opportunity for composers such as Coleridge-Taylor, as well as placing an extremely high burden of responsibility on whoever would take up such a task. This task was nothing less than the composition and successful performance of an "English" or "British" version of Wagner's operas, without, however, the lavish patronage from the aristocracy that Wagner had enjoyed.[43]

The quest to find or produce a homegrown British Wagner had been attempted earlier in the century. It was within the spirit of nurturing a new "English" opera school that the Moody-Manners Company, which performed opera at Covent Garden in 1902 and 1903, held a widely publicized competition for a new "English" opera. However, the winner, a score by Colin MacAlpin entitled *The Cross and the Crescent*, was given just one performance in 1903.[44] MacAplin's earlier works had positioned him well to be seen as a purveyor of "the English opera of the future." His opera *King Arthur* (1896) not only treated a suitably "British" and mythological theme, but also evinced a musical-dramatic style that was identified broadly at the time as "Wagnerian": as Paul Rodmell explains, this amounted to the adoption by British composers of an operatic style that would "dispense with… moralizing plots and twee, almost pantomimic spoken dialogue and, instead, embrace continuous music, and a more symphonic, integrated musical structure which, while it certainly did not have to be overtly Wagnerian, especially in its tonal language… had at least to demonstrate large-scale musical planning and a

[43] Paul Rodmell discusses the ways in which public subsidy for "the English opera of the future" was often raised as a possibility during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but was never achieved. See Rodmell, *Opera in the British Isles*.

[44] Green, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor*, 160. After the performances of *The Cross and the Crescent* in 1903, MacAlpin would soon abandon composition in favor of writing musical criticism, including his own theorizations of "the operatic problem" in Britain. For example, see Colin McAlpin, "Britain: Her Music," *Musical Times* 57, no. 884 (October 1, 1916): 445–47; "The Reality of Opera: Part I," *Musical Times* 58, no. 891 (May 1, 1917): 201–203; and, "The Reality of Opera: Part II," *Musical Times* 58, no. 892 (June 1, 1917): 247–49.

desire to move 'beyond' the regular periodisation and simple formal structures that characterised British operas of the earlier Victorian years."[45] Moreover, a "through-composed" opera would not be susceptible to the commercial "debasement" of being spun out for publication as one or more separate numbers, marking an important, moralistic distinction within the debate about the "English opera of the future" between (desirable) "art" and (undesirable) "commerce." A broadly conceived Wagnerism in British opera was thus to provide defenses against the perceived immoralities of commercial theatre.[46]

Moreover, the public discussion in the early twentieth century about Britain's "operatic problem" would have provided Coleridge-Taylor with some meager encouragement. For example, in 1903 Galloway introduced a motion in the House of Commons: "That, in the opinion of this House, with a view to directing the musical taste of the people into proper channels, it is desirable that National Opera Houses under public control should be established in the principal cities of the United Kingdom."[47] The debate in the Commons that Galloway's motion initiated was ultimately stalled by the government's request for more information about public funding for opera in other countries.[48] Furthermore, at the same time that Coleridge-Taylor was completing the score of *Thelma*, the production in 1908 and 1909 at Covent Garden of Wagner's entire *Ring* tetralogy using a English-language translation of the libretto was taken by many as evidence that grand opera in the vernacular could be successful in London.[49]

---

[45] Rodmell, *Opera in the British Isles*, 209–10.
[46] *Ibid*., 194–95.
[47] Quoted in Rodmell, *Opera in the British Isles*, 204–205. As Rodmell points out, as a Member of Parliament for a constituency in Manchester, Galloway was more sensitive than many to the existence of an audience beyond London's West End. Rodmell, *Opera in the British Isles*, 205, n. 57.
[48] *Ibid*., 205.
[49] *Ibid*., 206.

Despite this trend, however, there were few precedents for Coleridge-Taylor's attempt with *Thelma* to compose an English-language grand opera. As Paul Rodmell documents, from 1875 (the year of Coleridge-Taylor's birth) until Coleridge-Taylor's death in 1912, there appeared each year in London approximately two or three productions of new grand operas by British composers. Yet, not a single one of these remained in repertory for more than two seasons and many were performed only once or twice, often to under-filled houses and tepid (or worse) reviews in the press.[50] MacAplin's *King Arthur* is a prime example; as Catherine Carr recounts, others included Frederick Corder's opera *Nordisa*, which the Carl Rosa Company had produced in 1887, as well as Frederick Cowen's operas *Thorgrim* (1890), which John Caldwell has referred to as Cowen's "attempt to claim Nordic myth for the English musical theatre," and *Harold, or The Norman Conquest* (1895).[51] Even Sullivan's "light" opera *Ivanhoe* virtually disappeared from the stage after 1895.[52] Despite Carr's attempt to situate *Thelma* within what she calls "the context of other Saxon operas [composed in Britain] from the 1880s onwards," there is no historical record to suggest that Coleridge-Taylor was specifically influenced by any of these works.[53] In any case, he would have been too young to have seen performances of many of them. Coleridge-Taylor may have had these "Saxon operas" in mind when he wrote a letter to the journal *The Etude* in 1911, in which he stated that "unlike other countries, there has never been any real operatic hold [in England] until recently."[54] It seems much more likely, however, that

[50] *Ibid*., 208.
[51] John Caldwell, *The Oxford History of English Music*, vol. 2 (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 1999), 252, quoted in Carr, "The Music of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor," 161. Carr also mentions Elgar's *Scene from the Saga of King Olaf* (1896), which, as she notes, is a cantata rather than an opera.
[52] See Sarah Hibberd, "Grand Opera in Britain and the Americas," in *The Cambridge Companion to Grand Opera* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 403–22.
[53] Carr, "The Music of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor," 161.
[54] William Tortolano, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor: Anglo-Black Composer, 1875–1912*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2002), 95.

this was some rather optimistic thinking on his part about what he may have still considered to be the slim possibility of securing a production of *Thelma* with one of London's professional opera companies. In composing *Thelma*, Coleridge-Taylor was not the first British composer to propose a Wagnerian solution to Britain's "operatic problem," but at the same time he was hardly working within a living tradition of British "Saxon operas," as Carr seems to suggest.

Thus, after previous attempts to compose a British grand opera in the Wagnerian mold had failed to achieve "any real… hold," *Thelma* required him to (re)invent a Wagnerian-operatic aesthetic for the British opera stage. One of Coleridge-Taylor's precedents in this regard was Edward Elgar (1857–1934). Elgar never wrote an opera, apart from the incomplete sketches for a stage work called *The Spanish Lady*, which he began a year before he died in 1933. Yet, after his first trips to Bayreuth in 1892, Elgar's music, including well-known works such as the oratorio *The Dream of Gerontius* (1900) and the First Symphony, Op. 55 (1908), had been profoundly influenced by Wagner's operas.[55] If, as Byron Adams suggests, Elgar's "Wagnerian" chromaticism was received in early-twentieth-century Britain as "redolent of the foreign," Coleridge-Taylor would look to Wagnerian harmony and orchestration as means of rejuvenating British music with outside influences.[56] As he wrote in *The Etude* in 1911, Coleridge-Taylor sought in particular to avoid what he referred to as the "miserably rigid harmonies" of the works of British composers in the late nineteenth century:

---

[55] Byron Adams, "Elgar's Later Oratorios: Roman Catholicism, Decadence and the Wagnerian Dialectic of Shame and Grace," in *The Cambridge Companion to Elgar*, eds. Daniel M. Grimley and Julian Rushton (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 81–105. Adams also quotes the critic Neville Cardus who in 1939 suggested that "the debt which Elgar owed to *Parsifal* has been commented upon often enough by the enthusiastic hunters-down of the obvious." Adams, "Elgar's Later Oratorios," 87. Also see Laura A. Meadows, "Elgar as Post-Wagnerian: A Study of Elgar's Assimilation of Wagner's Music and Methodology" (Ph.D. dissertation, Durham University, 2008); Patrick McCreless, "Elgar and Theories of Chromaticism," in *Elgar Studies*, eds. J.P.E. Harper-Scott and Julian Rushton (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1–49; and Peter Dennison, "Elgar and Wagner," *Music & Letters* 66, no. 2 (April, 1985): 93–109.

[56] Adams, "Elgar's Later Oratorios," 88.

> Most English composers of fifteen or twenty years ago were content to use the organ-pedal-like bass in the orchestra, and the majority of scores were drab and colourless things.
>
> This cannot be wondered at, perhaps, considering that so many writers [i.e. composers] held church appointments, for church music has had a tremendous influence on all music in England; and unlike other countries, there has never been any real operatic hold, until recently, to counteract it.
>
> But even then, it is strange that nothing much happened to orchestral technique till the time I have mentioned, for there were hundreds of beautiful French scores in existence, not to speak of those of Wagner himself. The explanation may lie in the fact that Wagner's scores were all music-drama and the French mostly operas and suites, so the type may have been considered foreign and operatic…. [B]e that as it may, miserably rigid harmonies—even more rigid and monotonous bass parts, and orchestration without life or meaning were often the hall-marks of the English school of some years back.[57]

Coleridge-Taylor knew English Anglican church music well, and his deliberate attempts to develop a compositional style influenced by Wagner demonstrate a desire to position his music apart from a relatively insular tradition of English church music and within the international, European orbit of Wagner's operas.

Thelma, Wagner, and Italian Opera

As well as *Thelma*'s through-composed structure and the absence in the score of spoken dialogue, *Thelma*'s most prominent Wagnerian influences include its Norwegian setting and a scenario that recalls Nordic or Germanic mythology. With a libretto presumably written by the composer, *Thelma* shares several themes and plot details with the novel of the same name by the extraordinarily popular, British romantic novelist Marie Corelli (the pen name of Mary Mackay, born in 1854). According to literary critic Annette Federico, *Thelma: A Society Novel* (1887) is a "sentimental story about a Norwegian girl in decadent London," which by the time of Corelli's

[57] Tortolano, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor*, 95.

death in 1924 was in its fifty-sixth edition.[58] It is very possible that the novel's satirical descriptions of its heroine's travails as a (Norwegian) outsider married to a member of London's snobbish high society resonated with Coleridge-Taylor's experiences as a black man in Britain's classical music world and as one half of an interracial marriage. (His wife Jessie's parents and her siblings had been highly disapproving of her marriage to a black man.)[59] In addition, Corelli's particular status in Edwardian Britain may have seemed attractive to Coleridge-Taylor—she was a highly popular novelist who, like Coleridge-Taylor, remained somewhat outside the publishing establishment.[60] Yet, Coleridge-Taylor's opera does not comment directly on either London society or a marriage that is apparently fated by differences of nationality or race. The opera's main thematic similarities with Corelli's novel include a Norwegian setting (the novel begins in Norway before its heroine takes up residence in London with her new British husband), a broad, general theme of the triumph of good over evil, and the names of two of the central character: that of Thelma (a name that Corelli believed she had invented) and her father, Olaf Güldmar. Nevertheless, Coleridge-Taylor's first choice of name of the opera's central female character (when the opera's title was also *The Amulet*), as reflected in the extant vocal score, was Freda, perhaps to mitigate confusion with Corelli's novel. As Catherine Carr attests, the name "Thelma" is clearly inscribed in the "exquisitely noted full score" as both the work's title and to identity the work's heroine. After first using the title "The Amulet," Coleridge-Taylor presumably decided later that a correlation with Corelli's *Thelma* need not be avoided.[61]

---

[58] Annette R. Federico, *Idol of Suburbia: Marie Corelli and Late-Victorian Literary Culture* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 14; 162.
[59] Green, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor*, 81.
[60] Federico, *Idol of Suburbia*, 1–13.
[61] Carr, "The Music of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor," 161.

As Coleridge-Taylor's early biographer W. C. Berwick Sayers put it, rather than an operatic adaptation of Corelli's novel, *Thelma* "revolve[s]… about a Norwegian saga-legend."[62] (Writing in 1915 shortly after Coleridge-Taylor's death, Sayers could neither consult Coleridge-Taylor nor the score or libretto of the opera.) Although the opera makes no reference to any one particular Norwegian text, it bears several important echoes of Nordic or Germanic mythological source material. These include its setting—a pseudo-medieval Norway—and its use of magic emblems and objects (such as, in this case, a magic amulet, the opera's original namesake). Furthermore, like many examples of Germanic mythology, *Thelma* portrays journeying between natural and supernatural worlds. An entire scene of the opera (Act III, Scene 1) takes place in the undersea realm of the "sea-necks," shapeshifting water spirits (or nixies) that often feature in Nordic and Germanic folklore and whose best-known appearance in opera is the Rhinemaidens in Wagner's *Das Rheingold* (1869) and *Götterdämmerung* (1876).[63] The opera's *dramatis personae* in order of appearance are as follows:

Carl (bass): villainous Captain of the Guard, enamored with Thelma;

Earl Eric (Heldentenor): the hero, in love with Thelma;

Thelma (lyric soprano): daughter of Olaf, in love with Eric;

Trolla (contralto): Eric's beneficent Fairy Godmother;

Olaf (bass): King, father of Thelma;

Gudrun (contralto): in love with Carl, ultimately sacrifices her own life;

Diavelen (bass): demon/wizard;

---

[62] Quoted in Carr, *ibid*., 164.

[63] Sven Oliver Müller remarks on the British reception of Wagner's "Nixies or Rhine Maidens" [*sic*] at the first performance of the complete *Ring Cycle* in 1882. Sven Oliver Müller, "The Invention of Silence: Audience Behavior in Berlin and London in the Nineteenth Century," in *Sounds of Modern History: Auditory Cultures in 19th- and 20th-Century Europe*, ed. Daniel Morat (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014), 153–76; 165.

Neck-König (baritone), underwater King of the sea-necks.

In addition, the Chorus is deployed both onstage and offstage, including various combinations of choruses of maidens, soldiers, male sea-necks, angels, bridesmaids, and wedding guests.[64]

The plot of the opera is constructed around Eric's pursuit of Thelma against her father's wishes and Carl's pursuit of Thelma against her wishes. The opera's opening scene (Act I, Scene 1), a love duet between Eric and Thelma, makes clear that they each have reciprocated feelings for the other. However, as we learn in this scene, King Olaf has decided to set a test for both Eric and Carl in order to determine who is most worthy of Thelma's hand. Eric's fairy godmother, Trolla, gives Eric a magic amulet to keep him safe in his quest for Thelma's hand in marriage. As we learn in the next scene (Act I, Scene 2), the test that King Olaf as devised is as follows: he who recovers the King's golden cup from its resting place on the seabed (in the "maelstrom") shall marry Thelma. Thus, in a mode of dramaturgy reminiscent of many Wagner operas, this scene imparts narrative details concerning the history of how the cup came to be lost "in days of old."

In Act II, the demon Diavelen provides Carl with magic snuff to send Eric into a deep sleep and to make it possible to gain Eric's magic amulet in order for Carl to use it instead. Gudrun, who is in love with Carl, has her own reasons to thwart Carl's attempts to recover the cup (and marry Thelma); she betrays him to Eric, and eventually Eric takes possession of the amulet before he and Carl both venture out to sea by boat, ostensibly to recover the cup from the undersea maelstrom. However, Carl soon returns to the King, telling him that Eric has died at sea and that he, Carl, should by default therefore receive Thelma's hand in marriage. Although

[64] Carr, "The Music of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor," 164–65.

neither man has returned with the golden cup, the King clearly favors Carl over Eric and is convinced to consent to Carl's wishes to marry Thelma.

Meanwhile, Eric recovers the cup from the maelstrom: the first scene of Act III is set in the undersea realm of the Sea-Necks, who happily present Eric with the King's cup (which they have been guarding), for the Sea-Necks are glad to be free of the misery (the "gloom and care") that Earth's gold can bring to mortals. In the final scene of the opera, the marriage ceremony of Carl and Thelma is interrupted by Eric, who, to Thelma's delight, suddenly arrives bearing the golden cup. In desperation, Carl lunges with his sword at Eric, but Gudrun throws herself in his way and is killed. As the stage suddenly grows dark, Diavelen turns Carl into a "horrible form" and drags him away (the devil "claiming his own," as in Mozart/Da Ponte's opera *Don Giovanni*, among other examples of this narrative trope). Finally, Eric, Thelma, and King Olaf unite with the chorus to sing a prayer of thanksgiving to God.

Aside from the Nordic, pseudo-mythological features of the opera's plot, the influence of Wagner's music can also be heard throughout the score of *Thelma*. As Carr points out, Wagnerian techniques of harmony (such as chromatic voice-leading), melodic symbolism (or leitmotifs), and counterpoint between instrumental and vocal lines appear frequently in Coleridge-Taylor's opera. For example, in the first scene of Act I Coleridge-Taylor transitions cleverly from the spirited bacchanal of the soldiers ("Hail! Glorious wine") attendant on Carl to the first appearance of Eric and Thelma with their recitative-like love duet (m. 362, Andante (quasi larghetto) *molto appassionato*). Here, the F major and simple harmonies of the march-like bacchanal yields to a luscious D-flat major for Eric and Thelma's love material. In the melody line, Coleridge-Taylor uses an inverted pedal on C, the dominant of F, to lead by step to an accented appoggiatura on B-flat with a second inversion chord of D-flat major, which moves to

an Ab in the melody. This second inversion chord of D-flat major begins a harmonic progression over six measures that eventually resolves to a root position D-flat major chord, its arrival delayed by a striking shift by common tone back to F major before a more standard IV–ii–V7–I progression of chords. This melody is carefully scored for oboe, muted violins and muted cellos, and is accompanied by harp arpeggios, winds and tremolo strings. The entire six measures of *molto appassionato* harmonic resolution in the new key of D-flat major also rapidly swells and subsides in terms of dynamic intensity, from *pianissimo* to *forte* and back to *pianissimo*. As well as tying these two sections of music together, this much more complicated procedure featuring accented appoggiaturas rather than modulation by common tones (in this case, F) also creates more poignant harmonies of the D-flat major love material: the appoggiaturas "yearn" to be resolved. D-flat major, as Catherine Carr points out, is also the key of the concluding section of Brünhilde's "Liebestod" that ends Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*.[65] Moreover, Eric's "love theme" has already featured prominently in the opera's orchestral introduction ("Vorspiel") in a different key (A major), thereby further heightening the sense of arrival when Eric finally sings the theme in the first scene. One of several leitmotifs in the work, Eric's "love theme" returns several times in the orchestra; it is especially noticeable at several of Eric's entrances. Harmonic procedures, delicate orchestration, and elements of ambitious, "through-composed" large-scale planning such as this exemplify ways in which in the score of *Thelma* Coleridge-Taylor sought to draw on Wagnerian techniques of operatic composition.[66]

[65] *Ibid*., 178.
[66] Jewel Taylor Thompson refers to Coleridge-Taylor's predilection for delayed harmonic resolutions and chromatic harmonies in *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor*, 180–81, although Thompson does not refer to these specifically as "Wagnerian." Thompson was of course not able to consult a score of *Thelma*.

In terms of its broad architecture, however, *Thelma* takes its cues more from late nineteenth-century Italian opera.[67] In Coleridge-Taylor's turn-of-the-century London, "Italian opera" more or less meant Puccini.[68] According to Sayers's early biography, Coleridge-Taylor expressed praise for Puccini's operas in 1907, when he was beginning work on *Thelma*. He reports Coleridge-Taylor as saying: "I am a great admirer of the modern Italian. I think Puccini has done a great deal for modern music. But then, of course, my sympathies are all with the stage and opera.")[69] Thus, each of *Thelma*'s eight long scenes (two scenes in Act I, four scenes in Act II, and two scenes in Act III) is structured in a Puccini-like style as an ad hoc, interlocked series of short set pieces or numbers, which range from brief passages of declamatory, recitative-like music to longer, lyrical sections that are vocal solos, duets, ensembles or choruses.[70] Each scene begins with a short orchestral introduction, moves through several different sections, often with an increasing number of soloists, and ends usually with a chorus, with or without soloists. At the same time, in a manner not anticipated by Puccini's operas, the chorus frequently also interjects, either on stage (as maidens, soldiers, Sea-Necks, bridesmaids or wedding guests or off stage (as unseen spirits or unnamed voices), sometimes to restate the final phrase of a solo melody. This use of the chorus is perhaps the work's main debt to Gilbert and Sullivan operas, which often feature the chorus prominently. In general, however, Coleridge-Taylor's thoroughgoing use of stylistic cues from German and Italian opera allow *Thelma* to vie for a place within the international operatic repertory.

---

[67] Carr, "The Music of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor," 197.
[68] For example, in 1905, Puccini's *Madama Butterly* (1898) had its (successful) British premiere at Covent Garden. See Mary Jane Phillips-Matz, *Puccini: A Biography* (2002), 151–52.
[69] Berwick Sayers, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor*, 99.
[70] On the "ad hoc" form of Puccini's operas, see David Rosen, "'La Solita forma' in Puccini's Operas?" *Studi pucciniani* 3 (2004): 179–99.

Nevertheless, *Thelma* would not be performed in Coleridge-Taylor's lifetime. In 1909, he took his completed, unpublished score of *Thelma* to the Carl Rosa Opera Company. The Carl Rosa Company, which had performed nearly exclusively outside of London since 1900, had enjoyed a brief, two-week return to the West End stage beginning on December 26, 1907, giving performances of a rarity, the British composer Goring Thomas's opera *Esmeralda*, which the company had commissioned and first performed in 1883.[71] This production of a British opera by the Carl Rosa Company surely seemed to Coleridge-Taylor like a beacon of possibility for securing a production of *Thelma*. Moreover, the Carl Rosa Company returned to the West End with positive reviews in 1909, just as Coleridge-Taylor was finishing the score. Yet, he was ultimately unable to secure a production from the Carl Rosa Company. A production of the work by the Moody-Manners Company was briefly proposed in 1909, but *Thelma* was ultimately deemed to be irretrievably unsuited for the stage.[72] Surely, Coleridge-Taylor's unprecedented decision to write his own libretto was at least partly to blame.

Subsequently, the score of Coleridge-Taylor's only opera was generally considered to be lost, yet in 2003 a copy of both the full score and the vocal score of the opera—each in the composer's hand—were discovered in the archives of the British Library by the musicologist Catherine Carr.[73] A performing edition of the full score was then completed and published in

---

[71] Rodmell, *Opera in the British Isles*, 100.

[72] See Rodmell, *Opera in the British Isles,* 102. After 1909, the work was almost, but not entirely forgotten. In 1910, a much-expanded version of the opera's prelude ("Vorspiel") was performed in a concert given in London by the New Symphony Orchestra in 1910. See Green, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor*, 161. In a personal interview with Jonathan Butcher (the conductor of the 2012 premiere of *Thelma*), Butcher described to me how the version of *Thelma*'s "Vorspiel" performed in concert in 1910 was greatly expanded from that in the score of the opera; only the orchestral parts (not the score) of the "Vorspiel" survive, but, according to Butcher, these indicate a piece of around eight to ten minutes, as opposed to two minutes or so of the *Thelma* "Vorspiel." Jonathan Butcher (musical director, Surrey Opera), in discussion with the author, February 19, 2016. *Thelma*'s next appearance in the historical record was in 1931, when Coleridge-Taylor's widow, Jessie, attempted unsuccessfully to procure government funds to commission a new libretto and mount a production. See Green, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor*, 216.

[73] Carr, "The Music of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor."

2008 by Patrick Meadows and Lionel Harrison.[74] At around the same time, another edition of the score was prepared by Stephen Anthony Brown. This (published) edition uses an extensively edited version of Coleridge-Taylor's decidedly stilted libretto by Christopher Cowell.[75] As work on a performing edition of the score was completed, plans were formulated to finally bring *Thelma* to the stage in time for the 2012 Coleridge-Taylor centenary.

Black British History on the Operatic Stage: *Thelma* in 2012

The public premiere of *Thelma* in 2012 was widely hailed in Britain as a historic event of national cultural importance. Coleridge-Taylor's lost opera was given in a run of three performances on February 9, 10, and 11, 2012 in the Ashcroft Theatre in the southeast London suburb of Croydon by the professional, provincial opera company Surrey Opera. The performances were conducted by Jonathan Butcher, Surrey Opera's artistic director, with stage direction by Christopher Cowell and set design by Bridget Kimak. The production used Stephen Anthony Brown's performing edition of the work, with Cowell's amended version of Coleridge-Taylor's libretto.[76] According to Jonathan Butcher, each one of the three performances was virtually sold out, a box-office success echoed by a subsequent report on the production in a local Croydon newspaper.[77] As well as the *Croydon Advertiser*, the premiere of *Thelma* was covered by national newspapers, BBC radio, and the opera and classical music press, as well as receiving media coverage in the U.S. and in Sierra Leone.[78] Many commentators mentioned the

[74] Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, *Thelma, or, The Amulet: a Grand Opera in 3 Acts*, Op. 72, ed. Patrick Meadows (Mallorca: Soundpost Publishing, 2007).
[75] Jonathan Butcher (musical director, Surrey Opera), in discussion with the author, February 19, 2016.
[76] Jonathan Butcher, "Meeting *Thelma*," *Opera* 63, no. 2 (2012): 142–46; and Jonathan Butcher (musical director, Surrey Opera), in discussion with the author, February 19, 2016.
[77] Ian Austen, "Never-Heard Opera Makes Money Back," *Croydon Advertiser*, February 24, 2012, 27.
[78] See Sean Creighton, "Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Remembered: Croydon Celebrates Its Greatest Composer," *Croydon Citizen*, December 10, 2012, http://thecroydoncitizen.com/history/samuel-coleridge-taylor-remembered/. Also see: Abdul R. Thomas, "Celebrating the Life of Sierra Leone's Ingenious Classical Music Composer, Samuel

(not-at-all-coincidental) correlation between the location of the performances in Croydon and the fact that Coleridge-Taylor had lived almost his entire life in the same southeast London suburb; as one commentator put it, "a nice touch is that [Coleridge-Taylor's] picture is included in a splendid collage of local celebrities on the theatre's safety curtain."[79] Frequently characterized since the start of his compositional career in the late nineteenth century as a remarkable exception to the whiteness of British classical composers, Coleridge-Taylor now had a full-length opera to add to his reputation as a major figure in British music history.

Surrey Opera's production of *Thelma* formed the centerpiece of the ad hoc Croydon Festival to mark the centenary of Coleridge-Taylor's death.[80] Led by Butcher, the Croydon Festival was augmented by the ad hoc Samuel Coleridge-Taylor 100 PM (Post Mortem) Collective (also known as the Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Network), as well as several other organizations; these organizations held a numerous other Coleridge-Taylor events in 2012 that complemented those in the Croydon Festival. These events included numerous concerts of Coleridge-Taylor's music, Anglican liturgical services featuring Coleridge-Taylor's choral music, public talks, film screenings, gallery exhibitions, radio and television broadcasts, and civic events across 2012.[81] There were several performances of *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*.[82] From March to July 2012, an exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery in London "document[ed] Coleridge-Taylor's increasing fame, with an early publicity photo complete with

---

Coleridge-Taylor," *Sierra Leone Telegraph*, January 29, 2012, http://www.thesierraleonetelegraph.com/?p=1011; and, "NPR Classical: Around the Classical Internet," last modified 2012 (unknown day and month), http://www.publicbroadcasting.net/wvia/arts.artsmain?action=viewArticle&sid=2&pid=1338&id=1903593

[79] Butcher, "Meeting *Thelma*," 142–46; 143.

[80] Austen, "Never-Heard Opera Makes Money Back."

[81] "Samuel Coleridge Taylor Centenary Festival" (Facebook Event Page), accessed June 1, 2016, https://www.facebook.com/SamuelColeridgeTaylorCentenaryFestival/; and "Samuel Coleridge Taylor Network: Croydon Festival" (Google Sites page), accessed June 1, 2016, https://sites.google.com/site/samuelcoleridgetaylornetwork/events/croydon-festival

[82] "Samuel Coleridge Taylor Network: Croydon Festival" (Google Sites page).

facsimile signature, inclusion in a group image of fellow-composers (including Elgar and Ethel Smyth) and posthumous renown on a cigarette card."[83] In February 2012, BBC Radio 4's arts show *Front Row* included a segment on Coleridge-Taylor, while in September 2012, BBC Radio 3 featured Coleridge-Taylor in its "Composer of the Week" programming.[84] The final concert of the 2012 centenary was a "gala concert" by the Westminster Philharmonic Orchestra and the ad hoc Coleridge-Taylor Centenary Choir performing his Violin Concerto and *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*.[85] The centenary events concluded with the unveiling of commemorative "blue plaque," a standard form of memorial for prominent personages in London, on Coleridge-Taylor's last home in Croydon, followed by a public reception with the Mayor of Croydon.[86] An article in the widely read *Huffington Post* referred to the Coleridge-Taylor centenary as befitting a composer who made a "contribution to the classical canon… [that is] impressive by any standards" and as an indication that there is "much still to tell" about "the story and legacy of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor."[87]

Many of the Coleridge-Taylor centenary events, including Surrey Opera's production of *Thelma*, were publicized as significant to black British history. In one of the most high-profile examples of press coverage of the centenary events, the BBC Radio 4 arts and culture program *Front Row* broadcast on February 6, 2012, introduced Coleridge-Taylor as "the first major black

---

[83] "National Portrait Gallery: What's On" (Past Display Archive: 17 July 2012 to 24 March 2013: Samuel Coleridge-Taylor), accessed June 1, 1016, http://www.npg.org.uk/whatson/display/2012/samuel-coleridge-taylor-1875-1912.php.
[84] http://africlassical.blogspot.com/2011/10/samuel-coleridge-taylor-network.html
[85] https://www.facebook.com/events/469726906411615/
[86] http://sct100pmcollective.blogspot.co.uk/p/events.html; https://insidecroydon.com/2013/01/02/conductor-alwyn-unveils-blue-plaque-to-croydon-composer/. Bizarrely, perhaps, the most useful history of London's "blue plaque scheme" appears in the *British Dental Journal*. See R. Bairsto and S. Gelbier, "Commemorative Plaques," *British Dental Journal* 215, no. 5 (September 14, 2013): 251–58.
[87] Hilary Burrage, "Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875–1912), Britain's Foremost Black Classical Composer: The Centenary Legacy," *Huffington Post* (online), August 29, 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/hilary-burrage/samuel-coleridgetaylor-18_b_1834759.html.

composer in Britain" and noted that he had often been "neglected" and "forgotten" over most of the last century. The program's presenter, Mark Lawson, and the composer Errollyn Wallen, a guest on the program, described the public interest in Coleridge-Taylor in 2012 as part of a wider trend in recent years of uncovering the history of "black people in Britain… who have been overlooked."[88] Likewise, an article on the Coleridge-Taylor centenary in the online magazine *Croydon Citizen* described Coleridge-Taylor as Britain's "most publicly known black personality" and "a strong supporter" of the "growing black rights movement."[89] In this way, media coverage worked to frame the Coleridge-Taylor centenary as a contribution to a wider, contemporary public discussion about Britain's racial history.

Moreover, the prominent *Huffington Post* article on the Coleridge-Taylor centenary began by drawing a connection between Coleridge-Taylor and the history of Middle Passage slavery:

> Just a few days after this year's Slavery Remembrance Day, on 23 August, we will mark also the centenary legacy of the black British music composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, who died one hundred years ago, on 1 September 1912.[90]

In this way, the article rhetorically tied the Coleridge-Taylor centenary to an increasingly mainstream memorialization of the British involvement in the transatlantic slave trade. While a public history of the British contribution to the Middle Passage slave trade was often considered excessively detrimental to British self-identity up until around the 1990s, more recently it has become more common to commemorate the history of slavery in British public life.[91] As Wallace

---

[88] http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01blgpb#p00nyvsf
[89] Creighton, "Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Remembered."
[90] Burrage, "Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875–1912)."
[91] See Catherine Hall, "Britain 2007: Problematising Histories," in *Imagining Transatlantic Slavery*, eds. Cora Kaplan and John Oldfield (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 191–201; John Oldfield, *Chords of Freedom: Commemoration, Ritual and British Transatlantic Slavery* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007); and Elizabeth Kowaleski Wallace, *The British Slave Trade and Public Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press,

argues, the history of Britain's involvement in Middle Passage slavery remained largely unknown outside of "leftist academic work," yet the appearance of public histories of the slave trade in Britain since this time constituted a "moment of millennial reckoning."[92] Wallace and others have shown how the commemorations in Britain in 2007 marking the bicentenary of the "abolition" of the transatlantic slave trade—commemorations that included high-profile museum and civic events and public broadcasting—made a signal contribution to the consolidation of a mainstream status for the history of Middle Passage slavery in British public life in the twenty-first-century.[93] By tying the Coleridge-Taylor centenary to this institutionalized historiography of black Britain, the coverage of the Coleridge-Taylor centenary in the *Huffington Post* represented Coleridge-Taylor's life and works as an aspect of black British history that would accede to the status of mainstream public history in twenty-first-century Britain.

As the centerpiece of the centenary events, Surrey Opera's premiere of *Thelma* was itself also framed specifically as a contribution to a public history of black Britain. It was not just any work by Coleridge-Taylor that had been re-discovered in the British Library and that would be performed for the first time; the news that Coleridge-Taylor had a full-length grand opera within

---

2006). Also see Christine Chivallon, "Bristol and the Eruption of Memory: Making the Slave-Trading Past Visible," *Social & Cultural Geography* 2, no. 3 (2001): 347–63; Madge Dresser, "Remembering Slavery and Abolition in Bristol," *Slavery & Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies* 30, no. 2 (2009): 223–46; Jo Littler, "British Heritage and the Legacies of 'Race,'" in *The Politics of Heritage: The Legacies of Race*, eds. Jo Littler and Roshi Naidoo (New York: Routledge, 2004); Laurajane Smith, Geoff Cubitt, Kalliopi Fouseki, and Ross Wilson, eds., *Representing Enslavement and Abolition in Museums: Ambiguous Engagements* (New York: Routledge, 2011); and Ana Lucia Araujo, ed., *Politics of Memory: Making Slavery Visible in the Public Space* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

[92] Kowaleski Wallace, *The British Slave Trade and Public Memory*, 17.

[93] Anthony Tibbles, "Facing Slavery's Past: The Bicentenary of the Abolition of the British Slave Trade," *Slavery & Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies* 29, no. 2 (2008): 293–303; Diana Paton, "Interpreting the Bicentenary in Britain," *Slavery & Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies* 30, no. 2 (2009): 277–89; and Ross Wilson, "Remembering to Forget? The BBC Abolition Season and Media Memory of Britain's Transatlantic Slave Trade," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 28, no. 3 (2008): 391–403.

his oeuvre bolstered claims that Coleridge-Taylor should be considered a major figure in British music history. For example, an article in the *Surrey Mirror* in August 2011 announced that:

> the world premiere of an opera composed by Croydon's 'forgotten' black composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor is to be staged in the town next year. It will be the highlight of celebrations marking the 100th anniversary of the composer's death.[94]

In this way, press coverage of *Thelma* worked to center Coleridge-Taylor within British cultural history as a racialized (non-white) historical subject, as the opera's premiere became the occasion for black history to appear as British public history.

More specifically, the 2012 Coleridge-Taylor centenary and the premiere of *Thelma* in particular illustrate the ways in which a discourse of black history has gained prominence and ground within at the center of British public life, especially in the period since the 1990s. As Eva Ulrike Pirker has noted, black history "has… become a subject matter that can be transported comfortably via mainstream [British] cultural enunciations," emerging in the twenty-first century as a "new and celebrated… [part of] British history and heritage culture."[95] Yet, while "the negotiation of the black experience in Britain has emerged in the wider public arena," Pirker argues, this recalibration of the cultural center in terms of a racially diverse public history has not been without several significant "costs."[96] For instance, Pirker explains how interest in black British history by mainstream cultural institutions has expanded in such a way that has resulted in a canonization of certain historical events and an inattention to others. According to Pirker, one key example is the events of the SS *Empire Windrush*, which docked at Tilbury near London

---

[94] "Festival Will Mark Life of Composer," *Surrey Mirror*, http://www.surreymirror.co.uk/Festival-mark-life-composer/story-13077458-detail/story.html
[95] Pirker, *Narrative Projections*, 16; 4–5.
[96] *Ibid*., 4; 16. My use of the term "recalibration of the culture center" is indebted to Roderick A. Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things: The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 29.

on June 22, 1948 with over 400 black West Indian migrants to Britain on board. The Windrush story has since take pride of place within the "commemorative culture" of black British history in dominant and mainstream culture, obscuring the history of earlier black settlement in Britain as well as the entire history of British colonialism, which is indispensable for understanding the "Windrush migrants" not as strangers but as citizens of British Empire with residency rights in the metropole.[97]

Furthermore, Pirker identifies how the black history at the center of twenty-first-century British public life largely adheres to a (British) *national* rather than a *transnational* (or global) frame of reference.[98] Thus, one of the "costs" of making black British history widely visible in the last two decades, Pirker suggests, is that such histories become "minority histories" and thereby remain "strongly influenced… by national narratives and… cut off from other, transnational contexts."[99] Pirker argues persuasively that British "national narratives" of black history are constituted by "an omission, a brushing over, of traumatic aspects of the black experience."[100] What remains after such historiographical erasure takes place is a seemingly cohesive picture of "Britain's heritage culture" that cannot account for the role of race in historical processes of power.[101] Within such historical narratives, racial diversity becomes an abiding characteristic in Britain's national history, even while historical changes and conflicts do not have a racial dimension.[102]

---

[97] Pirker, *Narrative Projections*, 1.
[98] *Ibid*., 4.
[99] *Ibid*., 4.
[100] *Ibid*., 11.
[101] *Ibid*., 11
[102] See Taylor, "Taking Postracialism Seriously: From Movement Mythology to Racial Formation," *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 11, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 9–25.

Several other cultural and social historians have also drawn attention to the ways in which a series of omissions has characterized a growing interest in black British history over the last two decades.[103] Antoinette Burton, for example, shows how recent scholarship on black British history often reproduces a nationalist narrative. Positing that "history writing is one terrain on which political battles are fought out," Burton identifies within late-twentieth-century scholarship on British and British-imperial history a "remapping of Britishness, historically conceived," in such a way that amounts to "the complicity of history writing in patrolling the borders of national identity."[104] Burton emphatically does *not* associate this "remapping of Britishness" with an absence altogether of black history; rather, she locates it within "the burgeoning of work in the last ten years [i.e. during the 1990s] on the imperial dimensions of Victorian and… twentieth-century British society."[105] More specifically, Burton explains how much recent scholarship on British history has moved blackness and racial reference to center-stage only to produce an "aseptic" historical narrative of imperial Britain that "bears no traces whatsoever of the 'domestic' racial strife that was the legacy of the British empire to the twentieth century."[106] Blackness, racial reference, and colonized populations appear instead as part of an "*ornamentalist* account of empire" that constructs and publicizes black British history only to uphold a "nostalgia for the nation."[107] By contrast, empire becomes "cordoned off,"

---

[103] See Antoinette Burton, *Empire in Question: Reading, Writing, and Teaching British Imperialism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); Hall, "Whose Heritage?," 3–13; Kobena Mercer, *Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge, 1994); Roshi Naidoo, "Never Mind the Buzzwords: 'Race,' Heritage and the Liberal Agenda," in *The Politics of Heritage: The Legacies of 'Race'*, eds. Jo Littler and Rohsi Naidoo (New York: Routledge, 2005), 36–48; and Kowaleski Wallace, *The British Slave Trade and Public Memory*.

[104] Antoinette Burton, "Who Needs the Nation? Interrogating 'British' History" [1997], reprinted in Burton, *Empire in Question,* 41–55; 45; 42; 55.

[105] Burton, "Who Needs the Nation?," 42.

[106] Burton, "Déjà Vu All over Again" [2002], reprinted in *Empire in Question*, 68–76; 73.

[107] Burton, "Déjà Vu All over Again," 75.

rendered seemingly unimportant to national narratives in such a way that is "sanitized" of the kinds of "struggle[s] over power" that found and maintain imperial domination.[108]

Burton and others have also emphasized the role of public history in shaping historical narratives of black Britain. While Stuart Hall has discussed the role of British "heritage industry" in constructing a selective narrative of the British nation "from the viewpoint of the colonisers," Burton traces both discursive parallels and material connections between "aseptic" scholarly accounts of Britain history and historical discourse in more popular registers. For example, she discusses a public exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London in 2001, for which the historian John Mackenzie contributed curatorial advice and the text of an accompanying catalogue. As Burton argues, even though the exhibition helped put Britain's history of race and empire "on the map," it delved into the imperial archive only to return with images of "'happy' natives submitting to the imperial yoke compliantly, even with gratitude."[109] According to Burton, the exhibition exemplified how the movement of black history into the mainstream of British public life has often conceptualized the British nation in "splendid isolation" from its imperialist economies of racialized violence, exploitation, and genocide. Such public histories manage blackness by assembling a historical narrative in which the British nation is always already free of racial antagonism and only benignly and loosely connected to its colonies. If a discourse of black history occupies mainstream sites in Britain today, it does so insofar as it upholds distinctions between imperial "center" and "periphery" and jettisons historical evidence of racial violence, imperial conquest, and practices of anticolonial and antiracist resistance. In

[108] *Ibid*., 75 (emphasis added); 72.
[109] *Ibid*., 73.

this way, assertions of a British multicultural past now occupy official and hegemonic representations of British national identity.

A historiographical erasure of racial antagonism contributes to a wider ideology of postracialism. Postracial discourse is often understood as a deceptive, nationalist narrative of overcoming in which racial equality of opportunity and outcome have been achieved, despite the presence of material, social, and political inequalities.[110] As the black British feminist Heidi Safia Mirza has explained, "[i]n post-race times, it is argued that in contrast to the 'colour-line' that defined the 20th century, the embodiment of 'race' through skin colour is no longer an impediment to educational and economic opportunities."[111] In this way, postracial discourse represents the contemporary moment in terms of a liberal narrative of progress as the antidote and permanent cure for the racial pathologies of the past, thereby bypassing discussion of the racialized inequalities of neoliberal restructuring and policies of "austerity" in the twenty-first century. Since around the 1990s, and especially after the election of Barack Obama as President of the United States in 2008, postracialism has emerged on both sides of the Atlantic as a hegemonic ideology for making sense of neoliberal restructuring.[112] Indeed, as the editors of the collection *The State of Race* note, "[t]here prevails [in Britain] an oppressive and suffocating discourse which states that race is no longer relevant, that we are 'post-race.'"[113] Thus, in twenty-first-century Britain, an ideology of postracialism, as Gargi Bhattacharyyai argues, works to

[110] See Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and Racial Inequality in Contemporary America*, 3rd ed. (Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010); and Robert Gooding-Williams, and Charles W. Mills, "Race in a 'Postracial' Epoch," *Du Bois Review* 11, no. 1 (2014): 1–8.
[111] Safia Mirza, "Harvesting Our Collective Intelligence," 1–9, 1.
[112] See Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists*; and Jodi Melamed, "The Spirit of Neoliberalism: From Racial Liberalism to Neoliberal Multiculturalism," *Social Text* 89, no. 4 (Winter 2006): 1–24.
[113] Nisha Kapoor, Virinder S. Kalra, and James Rhodes, Introduction to *The State of Race*, 5.

"legitimate and veil the uneven impact of austerity."[114] In other words, postracialism cannot account for—and, indeed, thwarts analysis of—the racial dimensions of the worsening material inequalities in Britain since the widespread introduction of legislative priorities of "austerity" in 2010.[115]

However, in its emphasis on representing the contemporary era as one in which racial inequality remains absent, postracialism nevertheless entails a strong attachment toward "history." While the postracial claim of having "overcome" racial antagonism and inequality might otherwise be fully compatible with recounting a history of racialized injury, postracialism more usually involves claims that racial violence is absent in the past, as well as in the present. As David Theo Goldberg has argued, "[t]he postracial is not just… the discarding of the racial to the past of history"; it also entails a fundamental "denial" of a history of racial exclusion.[116] David Theo Goldberg explains this in terms of the apocryphal assertion that "I can't possibly be racist now because I never was then."[117] As Goldberg writes, from the late twentieth century onward:

> The material gains of the civil rights movement… were being stymied or set back by the emerging emphasis on rendering any reference to race illegitimate… Antiracism requires historical memory, recalling the conditions of racial degradation and relating contemporary to historical and local to global conditions. If antiracist commitment requires remembering and recalling, [postracialism] suggests forgetting, getting over, moving on, wiping away the terms of reference… rather than a recounting and redressing of the terms of humiliation and devaluation.[118]

---

[114] Gargi Bhattacharyya, "Racial Neoliberal Britain?" in *The State of Race*, eds. Nisha Kapoor, Virinder S. Kalra, and James Rhodes (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 37. Also see James Rhodes, "Revisiting the 2001 Riots: New Labour and the Rise of 'Colour Blind Racism,'" *Sociological Research Online* 14, no. 5 (2009).
[115] See Redclift, "New Racisms, New Racial Subjects?," 577–88; and Bhattacharyya, "Racial Neoliberal Britain?," 15–30.
[116] David Theo Goldberg, "The Postracial Contemporary," in *The State of Race*, 22.
[117] Goldberg, "The Postracial Contemporary," 22.
[118] David Theo Goldberg, *The Threat of Race: Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), 21.

Echoing Goldberg's critique, Paul Taylor characterizes postracialism as a "determination to whitewash racial history and the mechanisms of ongoing racial stratification—to obscure, ignore, or erase the evidence that race still matters in a variety of definite, concrete, and distressingly familiar ways… [and thereby] to block any reference to racial inequalities or hierarchies"[119] In Taylor's formulation, postracialism can be understood as approaching history with the affective posture of "determination"—specifically, a "determination" to "whitewash" a history of racial antagonism and violence and to construct instead what he calls a "colorblind" historiography:

> For the most vocal advocates of colorblindness, *history* has no color, which means that the role of color distinctions *in* history, in driving the historical processes that created the world we now inhabit, has no bearing on the conduct of our lives. When racial history comes to an end, when the idea that history might meaningfully be understood as having a racial dimension becomes unthinkable, then we become quite literally postracial.[120]

In this way, postracial ideology always overreaches its goal of representing the contemporary moment as uniquely unencumbered by racial strife. In its effort to support the spurious claim that in the twenty-first century race has disappeared as a factor shaping the material conditions of modernity, postracialism not only denies the racial dimensions of political economies in the present, but also ignores racial violence in the past, or what Taylor refers to as the "long sordid history of what we once called race relations."[121] As the myth of a blithely multicultural past now founds assertions of a postracial present that has putatively overcome the "problem of the colour line," postracialism remains burdened by the endless task of managing racial history.[122] As the philosopher of race Alfred Frankowski argues, postracialism's "aseptic"

---

[119] Taylor, "Taking Postracialism Seriously," 9–25; 13.
[120] *Ibid*., 11.
[121] *Ibid*., 11.
[122] Alfred Frankowski writes about how postracialism is constituted via "the hyper-production of memory [that] obscures the very real forms of violence directed toward non-whites." Alfred Frankowski, "The Violence of Post-Racial Memory and the Political Sense of Mourning," *Contemporary Aesthetics* 11 (2013). Also see Alfred

historiography of race "requires that the antipathy toward non-white communities and to their history can be addressed in a way that does not distort [or challenge or subvert] the way in which whites have benefited from, and continue to benefit from, institutions, traditions, and practices that have been based on the exploitation of non-whites."[123] A case in point is a black British history that constructs an "ornamentalist" account of empire by disregarding imperialism's constitutive material conditions of racialized dispossession, violence, genocide, and rebellion.[124]

In the press and in other publicity materials, Surrey Opera's production of *Thelma* was largely framed in accordance with a dominant discourse of postracialism in twenty-first-century Britain. This narrative made it possible to promote the performances as a major accomplishment of racial justice, while at the same time making it appear entirely unremarkable both for a black British person to have composed a grand opera in 1909 and for a professional opera company in twenty-first-century Britain to be performing the work of a black composer. For example, coverage in the national *Guardian* newspaper announced Surrey Opera's production as an important milestone in the racial history of British classical music: "Thelma is the (supposedly) lost opera by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Croydon's most famous son, and still the country's most celebrated mixed-race classical composer, who died 100 years ago… in the summer of 1912."[125] The *Guardian*'s description of the *Thelma* premiere implied that there are many nonwhite composers that are "celebrated" in Britain, thereby sidestepping both a history of constituting elite culture via racial exclusions and the fact that there are today virtually no other nonwhite

---

Frankowski, "Sorrow as the Longest Memory of Neglect," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 28, no. 2 (2014): 154–68.

[123] Frankowski, "The Violence of Post-Racial Memory."

[124] On "dissent and disruption" as constitutive of British imperialism, see Burton, *The Trouble with Empire.*

[125] Tom Service, "Thelma: An Opera World Premiere," *Guardian*, February 7, 2012, http://www.theguardian.com/music/tomserviceblog/2012/feb/07/thelma-samuel-coleridge-taylor-s-operatic-magnum-opus-rediscovered-in-croydon.

classical composers recognized as national figures in Britain.[126] In this way, Surrey Opera's 2012 production of *Thelma* could become an important reference point for the dissemination of a postracial historiography of the British nation.

Moreover, the premiere of *Thelma* could serve as the occasion for a series of assertions about the postracial character of contemporary British life in such a way that disregards both an imperialist history of racial violence and exclusion and an entrenchment of material, social, and political inequalities in contemporary Britain. For example, in late 2011 a local newspaper, the *Surrey Mirror*, could describe *Thelma* as the work of "Croydon's 'forgotten' black composer," thereby setting the stage for Surrey Opera's production of the opera to represent an overcoming of racial injustice in the twenty-first century via a satisfying narrative of racial progress.[127] Thus, the *Surrey Mirror* went on the describe Coleridge-Taylor as a "pioneering figure for black composers and the black community in the country," without an attempt to specify any subsequent black composers for whom Coleridge-Taylor may have blazed a trail and without mentioning the neoliberal restructuring of "austerity" governmentality that has disproportionately redistributed economic, social, and political power away from British people of color.[128] Indeed, the same news item went on to quote one of Croydon's former mayors, who described Croydon as "now a great cosmopolitan town," despite the structural violence and growing racial inequalities in "austerity Britain" and the fact that Croydon itself had been an epicenter of protest, unrest, and rioting following what has since been ruled the unlawful killing

[126] See an article published more recently in the *Guardian*: John Lewis, "Ten Black Composers Whose Works Deserve to Be Heard More Often," *The Guardian*, June 2, 2015. Of these ten composers, only one, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, is British.
[127] "Festival Marks Life of Composer," *Surrey Mirror* (online), http://www.surreymirror.co.uk/Festival-mark-life-composer/story-13077458-detail/story.html.
[128] http://www.surreymirror.co.uk/Festival-mark-life-composer/story-13077458-detail/story.html

of a black man, Mark Duggan, by officers of London's Metropolitan Police on August 4, 2011.[129] This description of twenty-first-century Croydon as a "cosmopolitan town" seemingly without racial inequality and structural violence adheres to a postracial discourse of the contemporary moment.

Comments by Croydon's former mayor in the *Surrey Mirror* article also extended Croydon's purported multiculturalism back to the Edwardian period: the premiere of *Thelma* and the Coleridge-Taylor centenary events more generally, he claimed, would be "ideal way of showing the people of Croydon that the town had a rich cultural heritage."[130] This is an account of imperial London, in other words, that illustrates the kind of black British history that Antoinette Burton describes as expunged of "traces… of the 'domestic' racial strife that was the legacy of the British empire to the twentieth century."[131] As Surrey Opera's production of *Thelma* was characterized in terms of a historical artifact of a surprisingly diverse early-twentieth-century Britain, Coleridge-Taylor's life story was re-imagined as exemplifying Britain's supposedly diverse racial demographics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In this way, the premiere of *Thelma* was enlisted into promoting a historical vision of Britain as untouched by the global apartheid of Empire and the racial exclusions of daily life in the imperial metropole, while this historical vision of Britain at the turn of the twentieth century is positioned as presaging a racial diversity and equality in contemporary Britain. As a result,

---

[129] See Tom Slater, "From 'Criminality' to Marginality: Rioting against a Broken State," *Human Geography* 4, no. 3 (2011) (n.p.); and Paul Gilroy, "1981 and 2011: From Social Democratic to Neoliberal Rioting," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 112, no. 3 (2013): 550–58. On Croydon and the 2011 "English riots," see Cliff Stott and Steve Reicher, *Mad Mobs and Englishmen? Myths and Realities of the 2011 Riots* (London: Little Brown Book Group, 2011); and Daniel Briggs, ed., *The English Riots of 2011: Summer of Discontent* (London: Waterside Press, 2012).
[130] "Festival Marks Life of Composer," *Surrey Mirror* (online), http://www.surreymirror.co.uk/Festival-mark-life-composer/story-13077458-detail/story.html.
[131] Burton, "Déjà Vu All over Again" [2002], 73.

Coleridge-Taylor's biography could be represented as part of British national history in terms of what Eva Pirker refers to as a story of "black success" in which "the cost telling positive black British (hi)stories is very often an omission, or brushing over, of traumatic aspects of the black experience in Britain."[132] This meant that the premiere of *Thelma* itself could come to symbolize an overcoming of racial inequality in Britain in 2012, even as the history of such racial inequalities was omitted from the national history that *Thelma* was supposed to have overcome.

Several other examples of publicity materials and press coverage of the *Thelma* premiere disavowed entirely the relevance of race for Coleridge-Taylor's opera. A short essay by Carr published on the website of the Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Foundation in July 2011 recounted Carr's discovery of the score of *Thelma* in the archives of the British Library and introduced readers to the work:

> My initial interest in the life and music of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was sparked in the mid-1990's whilst undertaking research for an entirely different project—the history and development of Jamaican reggae, with particular reference to the music of Bob Marley. Biographically separated by seventy years, Coleridge-Taylor's name nonetheless appeared alongside Marley's in many secondary sources, as black musicians….
>
> [A]s I set about preparing, researching and writing, it became apparent that the main focus of nearly all other critical writings tended to concentrate principally on the African ethos and black issues of Coleridge-Taylor's music, exposing a lacuna in the dearth of thorough investigation into the music itself.
>
> Whilst acknowledging that it is, of course, vitally important not to disregard the African aspect of Coleridge-Taylor's writing or personality, he is without doubt a fascinating figure in British history and music, and I felt that the significance of his worth as a composer was over and above such elements as colour, race, gender etc. As such, I had decided to devote the focus of my thesis to examining the musical craftsmanship, and to assessing the subtlety and artifice of Coleridge-Taylor as a composer aside from external features that can, in some ways, prove a distraction….

[132] Pirker, *Narrative Projections of Black British History*, 11.

> [With *Thelma*] the libretto is probably by Coleridge-Taylor, and it is interesting that he chose something thoroughly European and closer to home, a Norwegian Nordic theme, rather than other topical subjects.[133]

Carr's efforts to situate Coleridge-Taylor within a British national rather than a transnational or diasporic black context undoubtedly were successful in securing a professional public performance of *Thelma*. For instance, her work was widely influential on the planning and execution of Surrey Opera's production, as an article by Jonathan Butcher (the director of the Croydon Festival marking the Coleridge-Taylor centenary, and the conductor of Surrey Opera's production of *Thelma*) in the magazine *Opera* testifies.[134] However, by appealing to a postracial prerogative of disregarding the salience of race and of claiming to move "beyond" the racial thinking of the past, Carr's commentary also works to silence both a retrieval of the racial dimensions of Coleridge-Taylor's life and works and a discussion in the twenty-first century about the role of black history within the political and social economies of contemporary Britain. Carr's description of *Thelma* as devoid of the "external factors" of "race," ultimately fit well with the Coleridge-Taylor centenary events, which framed Coleridge-Taylor within a British national context in which blackness would be a strictly "ornamental" or dispensable feature of the nation's history. In this way, Carr attempts to effect a split, break or rupture between, on the one hand, the "African ethos and black issues" of Coleridge-Taylor's work and, on the other hand, the "European" qualities of *Thelma*.[135] These "European" qualities, she asserts, position *Thelma* "closer to home" than works such as Coleridge-Taylor's famous *Hiawatha* trilogy, with

---

[133] Carr, "I want to be nothing in the world except what I am – a musician": Discovering 'Thelma', Coleridge-Taylor's Only Opera," *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Foundation* (online), https://sctf.org.uk/2011/07/04/i-want-to-be-nothing-in-the-world-except-what-i-am-a-musician/.
[134] Butcher, "Meeting *Thelma*," *Opera* 63, no. 2 (2012): 142–46.
[135] On the constitutive rhetorical "break or rupture" of postracial discourse, see Taylor, "Taking Postracialism Seriously."

its source materials and influences that purportedly bespeak more distant locales. Thus, she implies that "black issues" is incompatible with the Wagnerian or "Norwegian Nordic theme" of Coleridge-Taylor's opera, even as she contends that it is particularly "interesting"—and, therefore, presumably noteworthy—that a "black musician" such as Coleridge-Taylor chose to compose an opera "so thoroughly European." Carr's commentary does not allow for an "African ethos" that is also European or of "black issues" that are also Wagnerian.

It is worth noting that the 2012 production of *Thelma* was not always framed according to postracial prerogatives of national historiography, because doing so highlights the possibilities of challenging the erasure of the racial dimensions of the nation's past and present. As Ulrike Pirker argues, the increasing prominence of black British history within the mainstream of British public life over the last decade or two does not necessarily preclude politically and socially transformative action, even if such public histories are conjured by a postracial discourse that would disconnect racial reference from material conditions. For example, Pirker suggests, "[w]hatever its other functions within the national context may have been, the recent celebratory spirit and public demand for the Windrush story has been used within the black community as a platform for intergenerational reconciliation."[136] In a similar way, sites outside the British cultural and institutional mainstream allowed the premiere of *Thelma* to participate in alternative constructions of black history that did not reproduce a postracial "forgetting" of racial violence and inequality. For instance, Surrey Opera's production of *Thelma* was a centerpiece of events in 2012 publicized by the organization British Black Music (also known as Black Music Congress)

[136] Pirker, *Narrative Projections*, 41.

that aimed to retrieve and archive a firsthand historical memory of black music in Britain.[137] Although Surrey Opera's performances took place earlier in 2012, *Thelma* was promoted specifically as part of the organization's 2012 Black British Music Month, a series of concerts, talks, community events, and exhibitions scheduled across June and July of that year.[138] Black British Music Month 2012 was launched with a talk by scholar, musician, and music industry consultant Kwaku (who is known mononymously) entitled "British Black Music: How Far Have We Come?", examining the current state of high-profile black music-making in Britain as well as implicitly questioning a liberal progress narrative that would simply attribute the contemporary (twenty-first-century) era with having overcome racial barriers. Moreover, the talk placed the 2012 premiere of *Thelma* in context of the Coleridge-Taylor centenary as well as commemorations of the fiftieth anniversary of independence in Jamaica and Trinidad and the one-hundredth anniversary of Marcus Garvey's arrival in London in 1912.[139]

Another event organized under the auspices of Black British Music Month installed a commemorative image of Coleridge-Taylor in the London boardroom of the Performing Rights Society (PRS). A subsequent public seminar (entitled "Talking Copyright") hosted by Black

[137] Other events organized by BBMM included a group Wikipedia-editing session that aimed to fill gaps in the online, user-edited encyclopedia's entries on black British music and musicians. See […].
[138] In 2011, plans were still active for Pegasus Opera Company, a professional black opera company based in London, to mount a separate production of *Thelma* in the summer of 2012, but these plans seem to have been shelved some time in early 2012; though still active in concert performances and education and outrage work as of 2015, Pegasus Opera Company has not staged a full opera since 2010. Pegasus Opera Company's plans to produce *Thelma* in 2012 are mentioned in several news and journalistic items related to Surrey Opera's production of *Thelma*, including Butcher, "Meeting *Thelma,*" 142–46. Pegasus Opera Company's past productions, which include works by black composers such as Scott Joplin, Chris Taylor, and Errollyn Wallen, are listed at http://www.pegasus-opera.net/operas/Productions. Pegasus Opera Company has been involved in subsequent Black History Month events in Britain. See Charlie Peat, "Scholar Helps Bring Black History Month to a Close," *Enfield Independent*, November 12, 2014. http://www.enfieldindependent.co.uk/news/11595007.Scholar_helps_bring_Black_History_Month_to_a_close/
[139] On Marcus Garvey, see Marc Matera, *Black London: The Imperial Metropolis and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2015).

British Music/Black Music Congress discussed the PRS commemoration of Coleridge-Taylor. In particular, the seminar addressed Coleridge-Taylor's famous misfortune in selling outright the publishing rights of his cantata trilogy *The Song of Hiawatha* to the publisher Novello (thereby forgoing royalty payments to him and the heirs of his estate) and the importance in the present day of black writers and composers retaining the rights to their artistic and intellectual creations, despite the short-term gains of selling outright.[140] By relating the premiere of *Thelma* and the centenary commemorations of Coleridge-Taylor's death to both the contemporary conditions of black British music and a transatlantic history of black organizing across the twentieth century, the 2012 Black British Music Month events framed the premiere very differently from a dominant, postracial conception of black British history and in such a way that affirmed the lasting salience of race in twenty-first-century Britain.

Nevertheless, if events such as those organized by Black British Music centered the Coleridge-Taylor centenary and the first performance of *Thelma* within ongoing efforts to write black Atlantic solidarity into existence, they missed opportunities to come to terms with Coleridge-Taylor's role within a history of black internationalism and black antiracist organizing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In other words, organizations outside the British cultural and institutional mainstream, such as Black British Music, framed the 2012 Coleridge-Taylor centenary primarily in terms that stressed the salience of race and the importance of black solidarity in the twenty-first century, while at the same time largely disregarding Coleridge-Taylor's participation in racial politics during his lifetime. As David Goldberg has specified, however, challenging postracial discourse not only entails asserting the

[140] "SCT100PM Collective: Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Image Unveiled," http://sct100pmcollective.blogspot.com/2013/06/samuel-coleridge-taylor-image-unveiled.html.

relevance of race—or what he calls "racial conditionality"—in the present, but also demands a "historical memory… [that] recall[s] the conditions of racial degradation and relate[s] contemporary to historical and local to global conditions."[141] The rich history of black internationalism in the early twentieth century, as Marc Matera argues in *Black London*, provides a testimony both to the "racial order of empire" and to the formation of black solidarities in the face of racial oppression during this period.[142] In this way, a history of early-twentieth-century black internationalist thinking and organizing may offer a powerful "historical memory" by which to counter postracial discourse in the contemporary period.

The following section discusses how *Thelma*'s Wagnerian ambition attests to a black international culture of opera in the early twentieth century that calls into question the quintessentially postracial assertion that racial politics are extraneous to British history and, in particular, to Coleridge-Taylor's life and works. Here, I refer to this transnational black reception of Wagner in the early twentieth century as "Afro-Wagnerism," drawing on recent conceptions of Afrofuturism, Afro-surrealism and Afro-punk that understand such cultural-material phenomena not only literally in terms of the contributions of "black participants" to aesthetic communities more usually deemed the preserve of white artists and audiences, but also as a means by which to identify "race" in operatic texts and contexts in which blackness is otherwise dismissed. If Afrofuturism, as Rone Shavers argues, "us[es] fantastical elements as a way to address contemporary problems without seeming overly polemical or didactic," Afro-Wagnerism likewise employed aesthetic and cultural elements of Wagnerism in order to posit an alternative

[141] Goldberg, "The Postracial Contemporary," 22; *The Threat of Race*, 21.
[142] Matera, *Black London*, 17–18.

to conditions in the present.[143] Moreover, if Afro-surrealism pursues the task of "imagin[ing] a freedom that is not the freedom of the grave," as Anthony Reed contends, Afro-Wagnerism seized upon the Wagnerian preoccupation with *Liebestod* (love-death) in such a way that refused to concede the reparative politics, however evanescent, of anti-black injury and desolation.[144] And, like the "black radical imagination" that Robin Kelley in *Freedom Dreams* associates with an "emancipatory vision," Afro-Wagnerism summoned "a different future," even as it relied on a very concrete network of black-diasporic affiliations to develop and disseminate its rhetorical and political procedures.[145] The following section begins by examining Afro-Wagnerism in several writings by the black American sociologist, educator, activist, and author W.E.B. Du Bois's writings from the early twentieth century, before tracing connections between Du Bois and Coleridge-Taylor, close friends from the time they first met in London in 1900 until Coleridge-Taylor's death in 1912.

Afro-Wagnerism in Imperial London: Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, W. E. B. Du Bois, and the Endless Melody of Interracial Dreams

In a short article entitled "Opera and the Negro Problem" that appeared in the *Pittsburgh Courier* in 1936, Du Bois recounted his experiences of Wagnerian opera with rapt enthusiasm. He had first attended performances of Wagner's works at Bayreuth in the 1890s and since then had made

[143] Rone Shavers, "Fear of a Performative Planet: Troubling the Concept of 'Post-Blackness,'" in *The Trouble with Post-Blackness*, eds. Houston A. Baker and K. Merinda Simmons (New York: University of Columbia Press, 2015), 81–92; 87.
[144] Anthony Reed, "Afrosurrealism: After the End of the World: Run Ra and the Grammar of Utopia," in *Black Camera* 5, no. 1 (Fall 2013): 118–39; 137.
[145] Robin D.G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2002), 6.

Wagner something of a preoccupation.[146] Yet, "Opera and the Negro Problem" began by quoting an apocryphal interlocutor whom Du Bois identified with reluctant courtesy as "a certain type of *not unthoughtful* American Negro."[147] This "American Negro," Du Bois wrote, would ask the question: "'[W]hat has Bayreuth and opera got to do with starving Negro farm tenants in Arkansas or black college graduates searching New York for a job? It may be all right for the fortunate to rest and play, but is it necessary to pretend that this has any real vital connections with our pressing social problems?'"[148] Du Bois's article then offered a bold response to the question of whether Wagnerian opera had any relevance for the hardships of a post-emancipation age that, as he saw it, was still marred by racial segregation and black impoverishment: "I think it has. I have long thought so… The message of Richard Wagner stressed this point."[149] Thus, as Du Bois emphasized, "[t]he musical dramas of Wagner tell of human life as he lived it, and no human being, white or black, can afford not to know them, if he would know life."[150]

Du Bois's article in the *Pittsburgh Courier* makes clear that he was aware of the incredulity with which his remarks on opera would be met. Many people, including the "not unthoughtful American Negro," would likely scoff at his notion that Wagner's music dramas remained invaluable to everyone, even "starving Negro farm tenants in Arkansas," yet Du Bois doubled down on this claim. "The Negro problem"—Du Bois's primary category (as Robert Gooding-William has explained) for comprehending white supremacy—would not solve itself

---

[146] See Russell A. Berman, "Du Bois and Wagner: Race, Nation, and Culture between the United States and Germany," *German Quarterly* 70, no. 2 (Spring 1997): 123–35.
[147] W.E.B. Du Bois, "Opera and the Negro Problem," *Pittsburgh Courier*, October 31, 1936, reprinted in *Newspaper Columns*, ed. Herbert Aptheker, 2 vols. (White Plains, NY: Kraus-Thomson, 1986), vol. 1, 129–31; 129. Original emphasis.
[148] W.E.B. Du Bois, "Opera and the Negro Problem," 129.
[149] *Ibid*., 129. In *Souls* (1903), Du Bois agreed that, although emancipation had been proclaimed, "the freedman has not yet found freedom in the promised land." See Robert Gooding-Williams, *In the Shadow of Du Bois: Afro-Modern Political Thought in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 114.
[150] W.E.B. Du Bois, "Opera and the Negro Problem," 129.

without stimulating the "thought and enlightenment of mankind," a task that Wagner's operas were perfectly suited to achieving.[151] About *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Du Bois wrote that "the marvelous beauty of the music made an unforgettable memory," while the *Ring Cycle* Du Bois described as a sincere and profound "expression of human experience and emotion." Wagnerian opera, he argued, "rises to a great and glorious drama, which at times reaches the sublime." By using "myth," "poetry," "music and color," and "actors on a stage," Wagner had allowed us to apprehend "Truth" and "Joy."[152] In this way, experiencing Wagnerian opera was for Du Bois a form of politics in pursuit of the good life and a formidable challenge to the persistent unfreedom of black life. He concluded "Opera and the Negro problem" with an adamant plea: the "dreams and ideals" that Wagner's operas make palpable, Du Bois contended, should inform any serious analysis of the social text:

> Tomorrow I see… "Goetterdaemmerung," the "Twilight of the Gods." What for? To add to my imperfect education in Life. Men continually try to think that life is hard fact; that education is the learning of Truth. But education is far more than this. Life is emotion and feeling, love and hate. Life is not simply fact, but the thought of fact, the impression made by facts, the dreams and ideals that facts give birth to. So it is that the poet and the musician, the dreamer and the prophet must all be known and consulted by those who seek real education—who wish in truth to know Life.[153]

Du Bois argued, in other words, that there was far more to education than today's hard facts, because (as Paul Anderson explains in his gloss on this passage) "the dreams of one day could become the facts of the next."[154]

---

[151] Gooding-Williams, *In the Shadow of Du Bois*, 17. Du Bois, "Opera and the Negro Problem," 129.
[152] Du Bois, "Opera and the Negro Problem," 130. Charles Nero points out that Du Bois's analysis of *Lohengrin* in terms of "Joy" depended on a mistranslation, which seems to have stuck with Du Bois since his earliest published references to the opera in *Souls* (1903). See Charles I. Nero, "Queering *The Souls of Black Folk*," *Public Culture* 17, no. 2 (2005): 255–76.
[153] Du Bois, "Opera and the Negro Problem," 131.
[154] Paul Allen Anderson, *Deep River: Music and Memory in Harlem Renaissance Thought* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 45.

As his remarks in "Opera and the Negro Problem" of 1936 make clear, Wagner had "long" been one of Du Bois's preoccupations. Indeed, Du Bois's earliest and most famous invocations of Wagnerian opera appears in *The Souls of Black Folk* of 1903. Part political and sociological commentary, part literary fiction, and part musical inchoate catalog of Negro spiritual songs, *Souls* is a volume of fourteen essays, bookended by a "Forethought" and "Afterthought," and each introduced by biblical and poetic quotations and by quotations of the melodies of Negro spiritual song using musical notation.[155] As a whole, the volume is often considered an inaugural text for antiracism and black self-determination in the modern world.[156] It opens with a "Forethought" that includes Du Bois's famous statement, which he had given as part of his address to the 1900 Pan-African Conference in London, that "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line." The penultimate essay, "Of the Coming of John," consists of a short story about "two Johns": two young men named John—one black, one white—from the fictional town of Altamaha, Georgia.[157] Both men have grown up among the "intimate relations" of Jim Crow segregation and anti-black violence in the Reconstruction-era south, yet "black John" recognizes that the conditions of such intimacy—the "daily" round of "restraints and slights"—constitute a "Veil that lay between him and the white world." The two Johns meet unexpectedly in an opera house in New York City, where they attend a performance of Wagner's *Lohengrin*. "White John" (John Henderson) quickly recognizes "black John" (John

[155] For a brief history of the genesis of *Souls*, see Dolan Hubbard, Introduction to *The Souls of Black Folk: One Hundred Years Later*, ed. Dolan Hubbard (Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2007). On the hybrid status of *Souls* as a literary, sociological, and musical work, see Alexander G. Weheliye, "In the Mix: Hearing the Souls of Black Folk," *Amerikastudien/American Studies* 45, no. 4 (2000): 535–54.
[156] Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 1.
[157] Du Bois, "Of the Coming of John," in *The Souls of Black Folk*, 523. Du Bois was at this time a professor of sociology at Atlanta University, a black college in Atlanta, Georgia.

Jones), who is highly conspicuous amongst a "sea" of white faces, but John Jones is so enthralled with the "world so different from his" inside the opera house that at first he does not notice John Henderson.

For John Jones, the performance of *Lohengrin* becomes a "dreamland."[158] John "closed his eyes," Du Bois writes, while the "infinite beauty" of Wagner's music "swept every muscle of his frame, and put it all a-tune":

> A deep longing swelled in all his heart to rise with that clear music out of the dirt and dust of that low life that held him prisoned and befouled. If he could only live up in the free air where the birds sang and setting suns had no touch of blood! Who had called him to be the slave and butt of all? And if he had called, what right had he to call when a world like this lay open before men?[159]

As a "fuller, mightier harmony swelled" in Wagner's music, John Jones's rapture continues:

> [He] felt with the music the movement of power within him. If he but had some master-work, some life-service, hard,–aye, bitter hard, but without the cringing and sickening servility, without the cruel hurt that hardened his heart and soul. When at last a soft sorrow crept across the violins, there came to him the vision of a far-off home,—the great eyes of his sister, and the dark drawn face of his mother. And his heart sank below the waters, even as the sea-sand sinks by the shores of Altamaha, only to be lifted aloft again with that last ethereal wail of the swan that quivered and faded away into the sky.[160]

Meanwhile, however, John Jones/black John does not notice John Henderson/white John sitting near him, nor does he notice that John Henderson has arranged with one of the opera house ushers to have him quietly ejected from the performance. He recognizes John Henderson sitting near him at the moment that he realizes that it is on Henderson's account that he is being asked to leave the opera house. Smiling "grimly" at John Henderson, John Jones "followed the usher down the aisle." The price of his ticket is refunded by the opera house manager, who claims that

---

[158] *Ibid*., 526.
[159] *Ibid*., 527.
[160] *Ibid*., 527.

an administrative "mistake had been made in selling [John Jones] a seat already disposed of."[161] John Jones does not believe for a moment the manager's innocuous explanation.

Emboldened by the incident at the opera house, as well as embarrassed that he had not expected to find such naked racism in the north, John Jones returns to Altamaha, his "far-off home" that had appeared to him in a fleeting vision during the performance of *Lohengrin*. Perhaps he surmises that the unfortunate incident at the opera house stemmed from racist attitudes formed by John Henderson's southern upbringing.[162] Rather than remain in the north, he is determined to "help settle Negro problems there" —in the south, at their root. Back in Altamaha, John Jones opens a black school, but his new "up-ish ways" (in the words of one white townsperson) invite the ire of the local judge (John Henderson's father), who soon closes the school. John Jones then witnesses John Henderson attempting to rape his sister. He intervenes, killing John Henderson; it is only a matter of hours, John Jones suspects correctly, before he is lynched. In his last moments, as the lynch mob surround and begin to attack him, John Jones recalls Wagner's *Lohengrin* and "softly hum[s]" to himself "the faint sweet music of the swan." The final sentences of the chapter stage John Jones's death as a bodily annihilation; his Wagnerian "dreamland" disintegrates into an elemental white noise:

> Then, as the storm burst around him, he rose slowly to his feet and turned his closed eyes toward the Sea.
> And the world whistled in his ears.[163]

***

[161] *Ibid*., 527.
[162] Gooding-Williams writes: "The meeting of the two Johns in New York City [in "Of the Coming of John"] shows that a black man and a white one, if socialized in the manners of Jim Crow, can experience a tragic estrangement even when they encounter one another outside the south." Gooding-Williams, *In the Shadow of Du Bois*, 116.
[163] Du Bois, "Of the Coming of John," 535.

Du Bois's "Of the Coming of John" has often been read as an antiracist parable composed in a Wagnerian key. As Russell Berman writes, in this chapter of *The Souls of Black Folk*, "Wagner and *Lohengrin* are standing in as sites of a life without prejudice."[164] But the montage-like juxtaposition of Wagnerian reverie and racial violence that happens twice in "Of the Coming of John" also expose what Berman calls the "elusive possibility of justice, and the desire for a race-blind love."[165] In the chapter, Berman argues, "it is the music that holds out an alternative model of human relations" in which there would be no hierarchies of "rank or race," but ultimately the drama—or what Berman calls the "substance"—of Wagner's opera, which is sidelined in Du Bois's chapter, emphasizes "the failing of the aspiration of equality," namely the failure of the marriage between the supernatural Lohengrin and the earthly Elsa. In other words, Berman seems to suggest that a Wagnerian "dreamland" blinds John Jones (whose eyes, after all, are closed each time he becomes enraptured by Wagner's music) to the racial violence to which his body is subjected. Particularly in light of the fact that the subsequent and final chapter of *Souls* ("The Sorrow Songs") turns to the redemptive power of black American folk song, Berman interprets John Jones's Wagnerism as Du Bois's warning against a too hasty faith in any "utopia of equality" and prescription for a black politics based on vernacular traditions.

Yet, the Du Bois of "Opera and the Negro Problem," as well as Du Bois's character of John Jones, do not interpret Wagnerian opera simply as a warning, or as a cipher for the impossibility of utopian equality. For John Jones, the performance of *Lohengrin* in New York City is a galvanizing moment of epiphany, while his own "softly hummed" performance of

[164] Russell A. Berman, "Du Bois and Wagner: Race, Nation, and Culture between the United States and Germany," *German Quarterly* 70, no. 2 (Spring 1997): 123–35; 128.
[165] Berman, "Du Bois and Wagner," 128.

Wagner's "faint sweet music" in the final minutes before he is lynched allows John—and Du Bois's readers—to imagine a peaceful death that his body is denied. Thus, in the opera house auditorium, as John feels "with the music the movement of power," he is able to apprehend a notion of life beyond the "Veil" separating the white and black worlds.[166] Here, he begins to comprehend how such a project may be realized in the world of sensation—through "bitter hard" work. John's operatic rapture becomes a blueprint for an antiracist politics that might "help settle the Negro problems," even as his moment of aesthetic bliss is interrupted by a violent redrawing of the color line—a violence that is all the more insidious because it is dressed in the usher's and the manager's cloyingly diplomatic garb—that prematurely returns him to the city's "broad streets," the space outside the opera house.[167] Moreover, John's death at the end of the chapter becomes an occasion for Du Bois to express the "dreams and ideals" of a black life without anti-black violence, an aspiration that the "Negro problem" could in time be resolved. John's sister and mother—and other black folk in the segregated south—may yet live to "rise… out of the dirt and dust of that low life that held him prisoned and befouled." As Paul Anderson has argued, "the 'dreamland' that Wagner's mythic opera briefly opens to John evokes Du Bois's depiction elsewhere of a real above the veil separating the white and black worlds."[168] Thus, "aesthetic bliss and the erasure of the color line," Anderson concludes, "would forever be fused in Du Bois's thought."[169]

For Du Bois, part of the appeal of Wagner's operas lay in their global reach. In "Opera and the Negro Problem," Du Bois rhapsodizes over his "long acquaintance" with Wagner's opera

---

[166] See Anderson, *Deep River*, 41–45.
[167] See Ross Posnock, *Color and Culture: Black Writers and the Making of the Modern Intellectual* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).
[168] Anderson, *Deep River*, 41–42.
[169] *Ibid.*, 41–42.

Lohengrin: "I have heard it six or eight times, under many circumstances, in difference languages and lands."[170] In *The Black Atlantic*, Paul Gilroy explains this aspect of Du Bois's Wagnerism in terms of what he calls Du Bois's "diasporic, global perspective on the politics of racism and its overcoming."[171] As Gilroy argues, Du Bois wielded a globally calibrated Wagnerism as a way of conceptualizing a mutually constitutive relationship between black people and Western modernity; if the history of Middle Passage slavery provided Du Bois's rationale for situating black people "firmly… inside the modern world that their coerced labor had made possible," Du Bois's Wagnerism insisted upon black ownership of the modern world today. Thus, in *Souls*, Gilroy suggests, Du Bois "carefully displayed a complete familiarity with the cultural legacy of western civilisation. He claimed access to it as a right for the race as a whole, and produced a text that demonstrated how he regarded this legacy as his own personal property."[172] Likewise, Paul Anderson has referred to this feature of *Souls* as the text's "cosmopolitan desire."[173] Du Bois's text, Anderson argues, expresses an aspiration on the part of black people toward a kind of global or planetary citizenship, in Du Bois's memorable phrase, "beyond the color line." In this way, Du Bois's Wagnerism staked claims for a black identity and social life that exceeded the provincial and marginalized position to which a history of slavery and the maintenance of Jim Crow segregation had relegated blackness in the early-twentieth-century U.S.; Wagnerian opera, in other words, allowed Du Bois to specify forms of blackness that colonial modernity would deny.

---

[170] Du Bois, "Opera and the Negro Problem," 130.
[171] Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 121.
[172] *Ibid*., 128.
[173] Anderson, *Deep River*, 39.

Understood in this way, Du Bois's Wagnerism forms a poetic counterpart to the black internationalist politics that he was developing at the same time that he was writing *Souls*. The first Pan-African Conference held in London in July 1900 was an event of signal importance not only in Du Bois's black internationalist thought but in the inauguration of an anticolonial black internationalism for the twentieth century.[174] As Du Bois would later write, the Conference "put the word 'Pan-African' in the dictionaries for the first time."[175] The Conference brought together around forty people from across the black diaspora in Westminster Town Hall. At the Conference, Du Bois gave a speech entitled "To the Nations of the World" that began with a bold statement about the transnational scope of his antiracist politics:

> In the metropolis of the modern world, in this closing year of the nineteenth century there has been assembled a congress of men and women of African blood, to deliberate solemnly upon the present situation and outlook of the darker races of mankind. The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the colour line, the questions as to how far differences of race… are going to be made, hereafter, the basis for denying to over half the world the right of sharing to their utmost ability the opportunities and privileges of modern civilisation…. To be sure, the darker races are today the least advanced in culture according to European standards. This has not, however, always been the case.[176]

Thus, one outcome of the Conference was a petition sent to Queen Victoria, which aimed to highlight and protest against conditions in South Africa and Rhodesia.[177]

While Du Bois's Wagnerism could imagine a "dreamland" uninflected by racial divisions, his Pan-African politics was more trepidatious in prophesying any one particular outcome of the "problem of the color line" in the twentieth century. Nevertheless, Du Bois's

---

[174] See Susan D. Pennybacker, "The Universal Races Congress, London Political Culture, and Imperial Dissent, 1900–1939," *Radical History Review* 92 (Spring 2005): 203–17; Schneer, *London 1900*; and J.R. Hooker, "The Pan-African Conference 1900," *Transition* 46 (1974): 20–24.
[175] W.E.B. Du Bois, *The World and Africa and Color and Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 5.
[176] Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora*.
[177] Hooker, "The Pan-African Conference 1900."

speech at the Pan-African Conference expressed a similar form of "cosmopolitan desire" to his use of Wagnerian opera in texts such as *Souls*. Cast as an address to a global audience ("to the nations of the world"), it emphasized the riches of Western culture—"the opportunities and privileges of modern civilisation"—from which black people were currently denied access, and it expressed an aspiration for the leveling of "differences of race" at some time in the future. Like his Wagnerism, Du Bois's Pan-African politics was unafraid to dream of a world "beyond" divisions of race and nation.

Nevertheless, Du Bois was also clear that such a world would not come into being easily, quickly, or without hardship along the way. Du Bois's famous critique of Booker T. Washington in *Souls*—in a chapter entitled "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others"—has often been understood as a radical or separatist rejoinder to Washington's politics of black assimilation and compromise.[178] Indeed, Du Bois states here that a fatal flaw in Washington's politics is that it "practically accepts the alleged inferiority of the Negro races." However, Du Bois in fact stakes a far more nuanced position with regard to addressing "the Negro problem." Anti-blackness, Du Bois contended, was constitutive of colonial modernity, rendering any project of black deliverance from the modern world futile. For Du Bois, black internationalism named a renewed commitment to local or small-scale efforts to dismantle racist power structures and to combat white racism as it exists in world.[179] Thus, for Du Bois it was no contradiction that the 1900 Pan-African Conference submitted a petition to Queen Victoria on behalf of better and specific conditions for black colonized populations rather than, for example, demanding a complete

[178] See Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 46.
[179] *Ibid*., 91.

withdrawal of British force from southern Africa.[180] If Du Bois's internationalism was impelled by a cosmopolitan desire for a "modern civilisation" some time in the future that would include black people on an entirely equal standing with others, it also sought to specify concrete steps toward such a goal and to enjoin white and colonial power-brokers in this project.

***

Among the forty or so delegates and attendees at the first Pan-African Conference in London in 1900 was Samuel Coleridge-Taylor; also at the conference were Frederick and Harriet Loudin and Henry Downing, whom Coleridge-Taylor already knew. Booker T. Washington, another of Coleridge-Taylor's existing contacts among prominent black activists and educators, had intended to attend, but in the end was unable to do so. At the Conference, Coleridge-Taylor would have heard Du Bois's address "To the Nations of the World," and he would have mixed with anticolonial, antiracist, and anti-slavery thinkers and activists from across the black diaspora. Indeed, several participants at the Conference, whom Coleridge-Taylor met there for the first time, would become his life-long friends. These included Du Bois, as well as Henry Sylvester-Williams (a London-trained barrister born in Trinidad), John Richard Archer (who had been born in Liverpool and was the son of black sailor), and John Alcindor (a doctor working in London who had also been born in Trinidad).[181] Furthermore, Coleridge-Taylor was something of a feature at the Conference. As documented in the Conference's printed program, he arranged

[180] See Tsitsi Ella Jaji, Africa in Stereo: *Modernism, Music, and Pan-African Solidarity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 6.
[181] Paul Richards, "A Pan-African Composer? Coleridge-Taylor and Africa," *Black Music Research Journal* 21, no. 2 (Autumn 2001): 235–60.

musical entertainments for the event: performances of his own song settings, which his wife Jessie may have sung with him accompanying at the piano.[182]

Of the friendships and connections that Coleridge-Taylor made at the 1900 Pan-African Conference, the closest would be with Du Bois. In 1920, Du Bois would write that of the Conference participants he remembered Coleridge-Taylor "above all," and he recalled how he had visited the composer and his wife "several times" after the Conference, having been invited to their "nest of a cottage, with gate and garden, hidden in London's endless ring of suburbs."[183] Moreover, in 1904, Coleridge-Taylor finished reading *The Souls of Black Folk* and told his friend and future biographer William Berwick Sayers that it was "the greatest book he had ever read."[184] In early 1905, Coleridge-Taylor wrote to Du Bois to thank him for his gift of a copy of his "Credo." First published in 1904, "Credo" is a nine-paragraph statement on black diasporic identity, religion, and antiracist politics that circulated extremely widely across the black diaspora in the early years of the twentieth century.[185] It declared a "belie[f] in the Negro Race… in Liberty for all men" and freedom "uncured by color." Coleridge-Taylor wrote that his copy was now hanging in his dining room "where everyone can see it."[186] In 1906, during his second visit to the U.S., Coleridge-Taylor was not able to meet Du Bois; the latter stayed in Atlanta in order to deal as best he could with an explosion of antiblack violence in the city. Instead, Coleridge-Taylor attended a recital of his chamber music in Boston that raised funds for Atlanta

[182] A facsimile of the relevant pages of the Conference program appears in Richards, "A Pan-African Composer?," 239–41. The program was printed in Croydon, suggesting that Coleridge-Taylor may have overseen the organization of the entire event.
[183] Du Bois, *Darkwater* (quoted in Green, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor*, 97).
[184] Green, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor*, 144.
[185] Manning Marable, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Black Radical Democrat* (New York: Routledge, 2015).
[186] Green, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor* 144.

University where Du Bois taught.[187] Given the correspondence and friendship between the Du Bois and Coleridge-Taylor, it is not surprising that Coleridge-Taylor's family remained in contact with Du Bois long after the composer's death.

The close connection between Coleridge-Taylor and Du Bois is further confirmed by Du Bois's later writings. In a chapter of Du Bois's *Darkwater: Voices from within the Veil* (1920) entitled "The Immortal Child," Du Bois discusses Coleridge-Taylor's life at length, introducing him as "one of the most notable modern English composers." Coleridge-Taylor, Du Bois argues here, represents the possibility of hope for a humanity that is currently fractured by racial divisions. For Du Bois, Coleridge-Taylor demonstrated the equal intelligence and creative potential of black people, as well as the severe obstacles to artistic and intellectual achievement currently facing black people. Coleridge-Taylor's career as a composer of international renown provoked in Du Bois the feeling of being "torn between something like shamefaced anger or impatient amazement." It implied that innumerable black people were currently being prevented from fulfilling their potential, since instead of nurturing black achievement, "we send it to jail." Du Bois drew parallels between Jim Crow segregation in the U.S. and the "color line" in England: "We know in America how to discourage, choke, and murder ability when it so far forgets itself as to choose a dark skin. England, thank God, is slightly more civilized than her colonies; but even there the path of this young man was no way of roses and just a shade thornier than that of white men." Thus, Coleridge-Taylor's success, Du Bois suggested, was a result not only of a "sheer accident" that allowed a black person to receive opportunities of musical training, but also of a strong ambition that compelled him not to settle for easy comforts: he

[187] *Ibid*., 150–51.

"paus[ed] for glimpses of the stars when a world full of charcoal glowed far more warmly and comfortably."[188] It was, moreover, "the hint here and there of colour discrimination in England," Du Bois asserted, that "aroused in [Coleridge-Taylor] deeper and more poignant sympathy with this people throughout the world." In other words, Du Bois attributed to Coleridge-Taylor a similar capacity for dreaming and aesthetic bliss to that of his fictional character of John Jones in *The Souls of Black Folk*, even as he recounts the details of Coleridge-Taylor's life in order to make a specific case for black education and the dismantling of racial prejudice among whites across in differentiated sites across the black Atlantic. In this way, Du Bois's invocation of Coleridge-Taylor in "The Immortal Child" is analogous to his invocations elsewhere of Wagner and Wagner's operas; Du Bois's reckoning with Coleridge-Taylor provided the occasion for him to expound a black internationalism that prioritized both the transcendent qualities of a global, Western high culture and a withering critique of anti-black prejudice as it was manifest in different locales within the modern world.

"No Sorrow Enters Here": Thelma's Operatic Dreamland

Du Bois's Wagnerism and the close connections between Du Bois and Coleridge-Taylor help us understand an important scene in *Thelma* that has long been considered problematic. The opera's "undersea" scene (Act III, Scene 1) was considered unstageable by the Carl Rosa Opera Company, whom Coleridge-Taylor approached in 1909 in the hope of securing a production of the work. As Berwick Sayers reports, the Company's director "pronounced it [the opera] to be utterly unsuitable for representation" primarily on the basis of the difficulties posed by a long

[188] Du Bois, *Darkwater*.

and indispensable scene set entirely underwater.[189] This scene takes place in "the maelstrom spirits' banqueting hall beneath the sea." It begins with Eric and Trolla's arrival into the Sea-Necks' kingdom, and it ends with Eric and Trolla departing back to the "mortal world" with King Olaf's golden cup, which the Sea-Necks have gladly given Eric. Eric's determination is now renewed, and he re-commits to tackling the mortal world of love and death: "My spirit yearns within me pines to seek the beaming light of day." The Sea-Necks' realm is a world of aesthetic bliss, "free from gloom and care" and divorced from earthly attachments to material possessions (such as the golden cup). Indeed, it is characterized by aesthetic pleasure, for the Sea-Necks perform an extensive "fantastic dance" for Eric's benefit during as much as half of the scene.

Eric's arrival into the Sea-Necks' supernatural kingdom mirrors John Jones's moments of rapture during the performance of *Lohengrin*, while Eric's departure—his decision to return to "earthly skies"—recalls John Jones's and Du Bois's understanding of aesthetic bliss as both a wellspring of creative thought and only ever a partial solution to violence and privation; above the sea, as Trolla recounts, "they kill and fight each other for gold, creating… misery and grief," whereas the Sea-Necks proudly "disdain" the "glare" of gold: "no sorrow enters here," they proclaim. In this way, *Thelma*'s "undersea" scene stages Du Bois's dialectic between an orientation toward a transcendent, supersensible realm (such as the space above the veil that *Lohengrin* reveals to John Jones) and a negotiation with the specific social forces of the material world.[190]

[189] Carr, "The Music of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor," 162.
[190] On this "dialectic" in Du Bois's writing, see Anderson, *Deep River*, 48.

Understood in this way, the "undersea" scene in *Thelma* indexes a history of postracial aspiration that extends back to the early twentieth century. While first performance of the opera in 2012 was largely framed by a racial historiography discourse that figures the twenty-first century as uniquely postracial, a reading of *Thelma* as an artifact of early-twentieth-century Afro-Wagnerism challenges the claim that today's discourse of racial transcendence makes the contemporary era distinctive. Like the concept of race that postracialism disavows, postracialism, too, has a long history, including within a politics of social, economic, and political equality, such as that of Du Bois. As Paul Taylor has argued, part of postracialism's work takes the form a "visionary experiment… [that] urges us to take up the task of making a future that refuses the models of the past."[191] The value of reading *Thelma* in this way lies in the ways in which doing so allows us, in Taylor's words, "to contest the slippage between postracialist arguments and postracialist ideology."[192] *Thelma*'s Afro-Wagnerism rehearses the ways in which blackness dwelt uneasily within "European" culture of imperial modernity, not only in the lives and labor of a "cordoned off" imperial periphery, but also as co-conspirator of European culture's abiding allure.

[191] Taylor, "Taking Postracialism Seriously," 15.
[192] *Ibid*., 15.

CHAPTER FOUR

REVISITING HAITI: BRITISH OPERA AND THE BLACK RADICAL TRADITION

In the first chapter of *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), Frantz Fanon recounts the "folktale" of a young black Martinican man, a "peasant," who returns to Martinique "after having spent several months in France."[1] The unnamed man has not left Paris during that time. "For him," Fanon writes, "the *métropole* is the holy of holies." Upon the man's return to Martinique, he is "radically transformed." He "answers only in French and often no longer understands Creole," yet his newfound metropolitanism means that he has apparently forgotten the word *plow* in any language." Moreover, he waxes lyrical about the wonders of Parisian life: he now "talks of the Opera House," Fanon remarks. For Fanon, these changes in the man are deeply symbolic. They bespeak the returnee's newfound derision of his "fellow islanders," who nevertheless treat him as a "demigod" upon his return. The man's changed demeanor also illustrates colonialism's insidious powers of persuasion by which the colonized are made to "feel the call of Europe like a breath of fresh air."[2]

Fanon's brief remarks on opera in the first chapter of *Black Skin, White Masks* precipitate a theory of postcoloniality.[3] As it "talks of the Opera House," his "folktale" discloses how the European metropole remains a suffocating and hostile place for the black or colonized subject, despite its alluring "call" ("like a breath of fresh air") to the subalterns of the imperial periphery.[4]

---

[1] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* [1952], trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2008), 7.
[2] *Ibid*., 3–7.
[3] As far as it has been possible to ascertain, the (extensive) secondary literature on Fanon/*Black Skin, White Masks* does not include any discussion of Fanon's remarks on opera.
[4] We are perhaps to infer that this hostility is a primary reason for the man's return to Martinique. It also explains the man's seeming reluctance (at least in Fanon's telling of the story) to discuss his departure from Paris with his "fellow islanders," given the man's outward appearances of superiority and pride by which he aims to hide what

Fanon makes this anti-black, imperialist hostility especially palpable in his commentary on the unnamed man's experiences of opera during his short time in Paris; Fanon saves his bitterest contempt and regret for this point in his telling of the story. Like the "bewitching beauty" (3) of Paris itself, Fanon surmises, the man's knowledge of Parisian opera remains a delusion: while the man "talks of the Opera House," he has never ventured inside to enjoy its performances, still less to perform on its stage. Rather, Fanon notes derisively, he has "probably only seen [the opera house] from a distance" (7). Fanon understands the Martinican returnee's reports of "the Opera House" as a failed attempt to assimilate into metropolitan culture, an attempt that, according to Fanon, remains futile so long as the opera house continues to cast its insidious "spell" (7) of both seduction and exclusion. As Fanon concludes, opera's fascinating magic works to uphold colonial power relations, not least by turning the Martinican man against his islander-compatriots and thereby against the emancipatory interests of a subordinated black-diasporic people.[5]

Despite its vehemence, it would be a mistake to read this passage in Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* as if it were wholly or simply antagonistic to opera and the opera house. It attests to Fanon's deeply ambivalent relationship with France and with the culture of the French imperial metropole. As he recounts the "folktale," Fanon interrupts the narrative with his own "talk of" opera in order to differentiate himself clearly from the Martinican "peasant" who appears not to realize that there is much more to the opera house than its ornate façade. Fanon's theory of opera opens up an evaluation of the entire social and material order of metropolitan racism, which, like

---

Fanon famously refers to as an imperialist "inferiority complex" (2). For a further reading of Fanon's theory of the returnee, see Robert B. Potter and Joan Phillips, "Both Black and Symbolically White: The 'Bajan-Brit' Return Migrant as Post-Colonial Hybrid," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 29, no. 5 (2005): 901–927.

[5] On opera and "fascination," see Gary Tomlinson, *Metaphysical Song: An Essay on Opera* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 3–4.

"the opera house," the "peasant" has failed to comprehend. By mobilizing the Parisian institution of opera, Fanon's "folktale" reveals the envy, desire, and distrust—the "distance"—by which metropolitan regimes of race interpellate the postcolonial black subject. It stages a confrontation between a subaltern subjectivity and the apparatus of imperial power, and it makes this confrontation the basis of both a powerful analysis of racialization and an occasion for resistance to imperialist procedures that would consign the black subject to marginality, even within the imperial center. Via an image of "the Opera House," Fanon mobilizes European operatic tradition in order to render visible the precarious position of the postcolonial subject.

Taking a cue from Fanon, this chapter explores relationships between opera and black radicalism in postcolonial Britain. In doing so, it examines cultural production in Britain during the 1960s and 1970s as part of the process that Cedric Robinson in his seminal 1983 study *Black Marxism* famously called "the making of the black radical tradition."[6] Robinson's notion of the black radical tradition remains broad enough to encompass the range of cultural texts and discursive interventions that I trace and assess in this chapter, from Fanon's theory of (postwar Parisian) opera to cultural production in postcolonial Britain, yet it coheres around the central idea of an ongoing, dynamic method of narrating a shared black past and forming a shared perspective from which to imagine black liberation.[7] For Robinson, the black radical tradition resides uneasily within colonial modernity, but cannot be reduced to Western intellectual, political, and economic systems.[8] Its most important "tools," he argues, necessarily include "Western culture" and "[Western] language."[9] Robinson explains, rehearses, and redoubles this

[6] Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* [1983], 2nd edition (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).
[7] See David Scott, "On the Very Idea of a Black Radical Tradition," *Small Axe* 17, no. 1 (March 2013): 1–6; 1.
[8] Brent Hayes Edwards, "The 'Autonomy' of Black Radicalism," *Social Text* 19, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 1–13; 4.
[9] Robinson, *Black Marxism*, 183.

argument about the interdependence of black radical tradition and Western culture when he quotes the black British-Trinidadian historian, social theorist and anticolonial writer C.L.R. James (1901–1989) describing the black Martinican writer and politician Aimé Césaire as someone who was able to "make… [a] ferocious attack on Western civilization *because* he knew it inside out."[10] "Far from Africa and physically enveloped by hostile communities," Robinson explains, "Black opposition acquired a penetrative comprehension."[11] Fanon—and the Martinican "peasant" of his "folktale"—"talks of the Opera House" because he knows that will make you listen.[12]

This chapter begins by tracing and assessing the use of opera in cultural production identified by Robinson in *Black Marxism* as principal texts of the black radical tradition, namely writings by Frantz Fanon and C.L.R. James. First, I return to Fanon in order to illustrate how opera functions in Fanon's work as a symbol of strife internal to black radicalism under conditions of European postcoloniality.[13] Fanon's remarks on opera by way of his "folktale" in *Black Skin, White Masks* diagnose the Martinican man's exclusion from opera and the Paris opera house in such a way that erases the presence of black masses in postcolonial Europe. As I argue, while Fanon's "folktale" stages a parable of black isolation in the postcolonial European metropole and the postcolonial "Third World," it also rehearses an operatic focus on the tragic individual.

[10] *Ibid*., 183. Emphasis added.
[11] *Ibid*., 5.
[12] On Fanon and the politics of "listening," see Ian Baucom, "Frantz Fanon's Radio: Solidarity, Diaspora, and the Tactics of Listening," *Contemporary Literature* 42, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 15–49.
[13] On the notion of "strife" internal to black radicalism, see Fred Moten, "The Case of Blackness," *Criticism* 50, no. 2 (2008): 177–218; 178.

Next, I turn to postcolonial Britain in the 1960s and 1970s and the work of C.L.R. James. Born in Trinidad in 1901, James lived in London during the 1930s and again from the mid 1950s for most the time until his death in 1989; in his 1963 memoir *Beyond a Boundary* he describes his reluctant identifications with certain notions of Englishness and his belated "Victorian" sensibilities.[14] For Cedric Robinson, James's magisterial history of the Haitian Revolution, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (1938), constitutes a decisive development in the making of the black radical tradition in first half of the twentieth century in its "theoretical reconciliation of the Black and Western radical traditions."[15] Yet, James's work perhaps exerted more influence in the era of rapid decolonization after World War II. As David Scott writes, the publication in 1963 of a new and revised paperback edition of James's history of the Haitian Revolution, *The Black Jacobins* (1938), represented a momentous "event" across the black Atlantic world that canonized James's work almost three decades after its first appearance as "one of the great inaugural texts of the discourse of anticolonialism."[16] The revised 1963 version of James's history *The Black Jacobins* famously includes a new essay concerning later postcolonial revolutionaries in the Caribbean entitled "From Toussaint L'Ouverture to Fidel Castro."[17] Furthermore, the 1960s saw the appearance of another work by James about the Haitian Revolution: a play, also entitled "The Black Jacobins," which was first performed in 1967 in Nigeria and subsequently produced in London for BBC radio in 1971.[18]

---

[14] See Christian Høgsbjerg, *C.L.R. James in Imperial Britain* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 19–21.
[15] Robinson, *Black Marxism*, 314. Robinson also mentions Fanon as one of the primary "revolutionaries" of the black radical tradition of "a generation later." Robinson, *Black Marxism*, 316.
[16] David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 10.
[17] C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, rev. ed. (New York: Random House, 1963), 391–418.
[18] James's play was based on his first work treating the Haitian Revolution, a play entitled *Toussaint Louverture* that was first performed in London in 1936. See Christian Høgsbjerg, Introduction to C.L.R. James, *Toussaint Louverture: The Story of the Only Successful Slave Revolt in History – A Play in Three Acts*, ed. and intro. Christian

Focusing on two of James's postwar texts—the 1963 revised history and the 1967 revised play, both named *The Black Jacobins*—I examine how these accounts of the Haitian Revolution mobilize the European operatic tradition. Whereas James's history makes no mention of opera, the stage directions in James's play-script delineate a soundtrack to the drama that includes numerous quotations of music and text from Mozart's 1787 opera *Don Giovanni*. As I argue, references to European opera in James's 1967 play provide a musical analog to James's new essay "From Toussaint L'Ouverture to Fidel Castro" included in his 1963 history; in James's 1967 play, opera functions as a commentary on what he refers to in the 1963 essay as the fundamentally modern—rather than pre-modern—nature of anticolonial struggle.

The final parts of this chapter examine interconnections between black radical culture and "national," state-funded opera performances and compositions in postwar Britain. First, I discuss the trope of British opera in Naseem Khan's *The Arts Britain Ignores: The Arts of Ethnic Minorities in Britain* (1976), and next I turn to *Toussaint, or The Aristocracy of the Skin* (1977), an opera by the white British composer David Blake (b.1936) based closely on James's 1963 history *The Black Jacobins*.[19] As I argue, Khan's *The Arts Britain Ignores* not only represents an unprecedented study of cultural production by British people of color, but also constitutes a cultural-historical artifact ("primary text") of black British social movements of the time, in which Khan was a central participant. Just as Fanon and James mobilized the European operatic tradition in order to comment on the precarity of postcolonial life, Khan appropriated a discourse

---

Høgsbjerg (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 1–40; 27 and 39 (n128). Also see Nicole King, "C.L.R. James, Genre and Cultural Politics," in *Beyond Boundaries: C.L.R. James and Postnational Studies*, ed. Christopher Gair (London: Pluto Press, 2006), 13–38; and, Judy S. J. Stone, "Curtain Rise: The Pioneers of West Indian Theatre 1900–1950: Errol Hill," in *Theatre*, ed. Judy S. J. Stone (London: Macmillan, 1994), 16–31; 19–20.

[19] See Naseem Khan, *The Arts Britain Ignores: The Arts of Ethnic Minorities in Britain* (London: Commission for Racial Equality, 1976; revised edition, 1978).

of British opera in order to challenge the normative racial order of postwar Britain. By contrast, David Blake's opera *Toussaint* revisits Haiti in such a way that questions the compatibility of subaltern struggle and European-operatic tradition. Whereas Khan's work calls for the rehabilitation of opera within postcolonial and putatively "multi-cultural" British society, *Toussaint* takes up the challenge of translating key texts of the black radical tradition into the medium of opera and into the official cultural apparatus of the British state, not least by listing writings by Fanon (*Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*) and James (*The Black Jacobins*) at the start of the opera's published libretto as "Suggested Reading."[20] Situating Blake's opera within a genealogy of adaptations of Toussaint L'Ouverture's biography by white British liberal intellectuals of the nineteenth century, I analyze *Toussaint* as an "anti-opera" that renders visible and audible the impossible task of subaltern inclusion within the apparatus of the postcolonial European nation-state.

[20] David Blake and Anthony Ward, *Toussaint, or The Aristocracy of the Skin – Opera in 3 Acts and 22 Scenes*, libretto (Borough Green, UK: Novello, 1977), iii.

Fanon at the Opera

> The black man entering France changes because for him the *métropole* is the holy of holies; he changes not only because that's where his knowledge of Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Voltaire comes from, but also because that's where his doctors, his departmental superiors, and innumerable little potentates come from—from the staff sergeant "fifteen years on the job" to the gendarme from Panissières. There is a kind of spell cast from afar…
>
> [L]et him sail away, and we'll come back to him later on. Let us now go and meet one of those who have returned home. The new returnee, as soon as he sets foot on the island [of Martinique], asserts himself; he answers only in French and often no longer understands Creole. A folktale provides us with an illustration of this. After having spent several months in France a young farmer returns home. On seeing a plow, he asks his father… "What's that thing called?"…
>
> So here is our new returnee. He no longer understands Creole; he talks of the Opera House, which he has probably seen only from a distance; but most of all he assumes a critical attitude toward his fellow islanders.[21]

Placed within a chapter entitled "The Black Man and Language," Fanon's (anti-)autobiographical "folktale" introduces a central theme in *Black Skin, White Masks*—namely, the psychological, as well as material, violence of European (post)colonialism by which the black subject is impelled either to "reject his [*sic*] blackness" (2–3) or to remain stuck in the position of the primitive.[22] As Fanon soon clarifies, however, the colonialist demand that the black subject "reject" his or her blackness does not mean that s/he will manage to become white. Like the "bewitching beauty" (3) of Paris itself, Fanon surmises, the man's knowledge of Parisian opera is a delusion: while the man "talks of the Opera House," he has never ventured

[21] Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 7.

[22] See Diana Fuss, *Identification Papers* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 141–172. Fanon opens *Black Skin, White Masks* with a cautionary tale of imperialist divide-and-rule: "In the [French] colonial army, and particularly in the regiments of Senegalese soldiers, the 'native' officers are mainly interpreters. They serve to convey to their fellow soldiers the mater's orders, and they themselves enjoy a certain status" (3). Fanon was born in Martinique in 1925, before moving to metropolitan France in order to continue his education. He then moved to Algeria in 1953 in order to run the psychiatry department of the Blida-Joinville hospital. There, he would play an increasingly significant role within the Algerian liberation movement. He died in Ghana in 1961. See David Macey, *Frantz Fanon: A Biography* (New York: Verso, 2013).

inside to enjoy its performance and has "probably only seen [the opera house] from a distance" (7). The Paris opera house casts a "spell" (7) of seduction and exclusion.

What we might call Fanon's theory of opera also serves as theory of postcoloniality. His insistence that the Martinican man's only encounters with the opera took place "from a distance" and from the outside of the opera house aims not only to highlight the restrictions on access to the prestigious institutions of "metropolitan culture" (2) that colonialism affords the black subject, but also to illustrate the power of colonial discourse to blind or deafen the black subject to the precarity of her/his position within the white metropole. For Fanon, it is not simply the case that the man has been forcibly shut out of the Parisian opera house by a color bar or by racialized impoverishment.[23] More chillingly, the man fails altogether to recognize the "distance" with which the white metropole holds him at bay, even while permitting him to reside among its opera houses, cafés, bright lights, and plane trees (3). Fanon's theory of opera attests powerfully to the envy, desire, and distrust—the "distance"—by which metropolitan regimes of race interpellate the postcolonial black subject. It stages a confrontation between a subaltern subjectivity and the instruments of imperial power, and it makes this confrontation the basis of both an analysis of racialization and an occasion for resistance to imperialist procedures that would consign the black subject to a perpetual marginality, even within the imperial center. While the apocryphal Martinican man's "talk" of opera aims to repudiate his consignment under French imperialism to the status of a "prisoner on his island" (5) without access to the power of metropolitan culture, society and wealth, Fanon's narration of the "folktale" in the first chapter

[23] Fanon's analysis of material and psychological aspects of racism in postwar Paris is discussed in Jim House, "Colonial Racisms in the 'Métropole': Reading *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs* in Context," in *Frantz Fanon's Black Skin, White Masks: New Interdisciplinary Essays*, ed. Max Silverman (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2005), 46–73.

of *Black Skin, White Masks* performs the different task of remarking on the man's continued imprisonments within the putatively postcolonial metropolis.[24]

In this way, Fanon's remarks on opera compare to his self-conscious use of the French language: "to speak a language" such as French, Fanon writes later in *Black Skin, White Masks*, "is to appropriate its world and culture" (21). For Fanon, speaking French rather than Creole is the price of his admission into the postwar French left and into wider public debate within colonial modernity.[25] But it is also a uniquely efficacious strategy of subaltern insurrection: "There is nothing more sensational," Fanon writes, "than a black man speaking correctly, for he is appropriating the white world" (19). The black or colonized subject's attempt to adopt to "native" tongues, customs, and traditions may be fully compatible with the colonizer's efforts to "imprison" (18) the black subject within a subordinated position. There remains no place from which to speak or resist outside a white, metropolitan "world and culture."[26] As Fanon writes in *A Dying Colonialism* (1959), the French language became a crucial weapon in the Algerian struggle for independence from French colonialism: "Used by the *voice of the combatants*… the French language also becomes an instrument of liberation [such that]… the 'native' can be said to assume responsibility for the language of the occupier."[27] In a similar way, Fanon's "folktale" appropriates a language (or discourse) of opera in order to reckon with regimes of race in postwar Paris.

---

[24] In 1946, a few years before Fanon completed *Black Skin, White Masks*, the French National Assembly had voted unanimously to transform Martinique from a French colony to an Overseas Department of France.
[25] See Ross Posnock, "How It Feels to Be a Problem: Du Bois, Fanon, and the 'Impossible Life' of the Black Intellectual," *Critical Inquiry* 23, no. 2 (Winter 1997): 323–49.
[26] See Ann Pellegrini, *Performance Anxieties: Staging Psychoanalysis, Staging Race* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 97–99.
[27] Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism* [1959] (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 89–90. Also see Alamin Mazrui, "Language and the Quest for Liberation in Africa: The Legacy of Frantz Fanon," *Third World Quarterly* 14, no. 2 (1993): 351–63.

Yet, Fanon's "folktale" ultimately paints a simplistic picture of the Martinican "peasant," as his own commentary on the narrative indicates. If Fanon is so able to recognize the inevitable "distance" that lies between the postcolonial black subject and the institutions and apparatus of the European nation-state (such as the opera house), could it not be the case that the Martinican "peasant" comprehends this predicament, too? After all, the man's biography mirrors Fanon's place of birth in Martinique and sojourns in Paris in the 1940s. Fanon's "folktale" constructs the Martinican "peasant" as apocryphal figure, as a presumptively telling case study of the tragedy of colonial modernity. In doing so, it disguises its status as autobiography. The world-historical individual who finds himself detached from the opera house and from whom Fanon attempts repeatedly to detach himself is erased of his historical conditions of production, even as the man vividly illustrates the fascination and "spell" with which racialized subjects take in metropolitan culture "like a breadth of fresh air" in comparison to the "prison" of the archipelago at the imperial periphery. For a different conclusion, we could turn to the Ivorian writer Bernard Dadié's nearly contemporaneous memoir *Un Nègre à Paris* ("A Negro in Paris") (1959), where Dadié's lucid meditations on his own enchantment by the French metropole suggest that Fanon too hastily diagnoses the Martinican "peasant" as ignorant of opera's "spell."[28] From another angle, James Baldwin's essay "Encounter on the Seine: Black Meets Brown" from his collection *Notes on a Native Son* (1955) casts doubt on the apocryphal status of Fanon's "peasant," as it chronicles several differently marginalized blacknesses and brownesses among the city's postwar populace.[29] Fanon's "folktale," meanwhile, focuses on the individual to the detriment of the

[28] Bernard Dadié, *Un Nègre à Paris* (Dakar, Senegal: Présence Africaine, 1959), quoted in Michelle M. Wright, *Physics of Blackness: Beyond the Middle Passage Epistemology* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 123–25.
[29] James Baldwin, *Notes on a Native Son* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1955), quoted in Wright, *Physics of Blackness*, 120–23.

black masses. Ironically, it cleaves to an operatic narrative of character emphasis and individual tragedy, even when it voices Fanon's affected derision of European opera.

"Where is the music I asked for?" Locating Opera in James's *The Black Jacobins*

While Fanon writes of France and the French context of antiblackness, the conditions of postcoloniality in London and Paris in the decades after World War II share several important similarities. In this period of decolonization, both cities had become centers for black migration from the imperial periphery to the metropole. Yet, while an anticolonial politics rose to prominence in Paris during the late 1940s (with the work of black intellectuals based in the metropole such as Fanon and Aimé Césaire, as well as influential figures of the white left, especially Jean-Paul Sartre),[30] it was not until the 1960s and 1970s that black and anticolonial social movements in Britain began to achieve wide recognition, from the emergence of the British Black Panther Party and a black British intellectual class in the 1960s to the series of industrial strikes by British people of color and the exponential expansion of London's Notting Hill Carnival of Caribbean and black culture in the 1970s. Born a colonial subject of British Empire in Trinidad in 1901, the black historian, journalist, and essayist Cyril Lionel Robert "C.L.R." James experienced and helped catalyze this growth and solidification of black radical culture in Britain. James first lived in Britain during the 1930s, when he was a leading member of Marxist and Pan-African intellectual and political movements based in London.[31]

[30] See Gary Wilder, "Race, Reason, and Impasse: Césaire, Fanon, and the Legacy of Emancipation," *Radical History Review* 90 (Fall 2004): 31–61.
[31] Høgsbjerg, *C.L.R. James in Imperial Britain*.

After being expelled from the United States in 1953, James returned to Britain, where he lived for most of his life until his death in London in 1989. Throughout the postwar period, James remained a perspicuous observer, critic, and member of antiracist and anticolonial organizing across the black Atlantic world. While James's work has perhaps become more well-known after his death,[32] James's writing served as an archive of thinking and insight for a range of black radicalisms in postwar Britain, such as the British Black Panther Party during the late 1960s and 1970s.[33] James himself, in a speech on "Black Power" given in London in 1967, argued that what he saw as the transnational Black Power movement of the time "represents the high peak of thought on the Negro question which has been going on for over half a century," as he railed against the fact that "too many people see Black Power and its advocates as some sort of portent, a sudden apparition, as some racist eruption from the depths of black oppression and black backwardness."[34]

The 1930s saw James complete several pieces of writing on the Haitian Revolution of 1791 to 1804. James's preoccupation with the history of Haitian Revolution coincided with a burgeoning interest in Haiti on the part of several other radical black writers, such as Langston Hughes (who visited Haiti in 1932), and prefigured a sustained investment in recovering and communicating Haitian history in subsequent decades, including in writings by Aimé Césaire, Édouard Glissant, Derek Walcott, and Lorraine Hansberry, and in music and video by the

---

[32] Grant Farred, Introduction to *Rethinking C.L.R. James* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1995), 1.
[33] See R.E.R. Bunce and Paul Field, "Obi B. Egbuna, C.L.R. James and the Birth of Black Power in Britain: Black Radicalism in Britain 1967–72," *Twentieth Century British History* 22, no. 3 (2011): 1–24; Ashley Dawson, "'Love Music, Hate Racism': The Cultural Politics of the Rock Against Racism Campaigns, 1976–1981," *Postmodern Culture* 16, no. 1 (September 2005); and A. Sivanandan, "From Resistance to Rebellion: Asian and Afro-Caribbean Struggles in Britain" [1981], reprinted in *Catching History on the Wing: Race, Culture and Globalisation* (London: Pluto Press, 2008), 90–139.
[34] C.L.R. James, "Black Power" [1967], reprinted in *The C.L.R. James Reader*, ed. Anna Grimshaw (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1992), 362–74; 367.

Haitian-American rapper Wyclef Jean.[35] As Jeremy Matthew Glick argues, "Haiti is the generative site *par excellence* for creative work by African diasporic artist-intellectuals attempting to break free from impasses in their respective political conjunctures. Revisiting Haiti acts as a solvent against political ossification."[36] James's "revisiting" of Haiti/San Domingo is first represented in his writing by an article on the Haitian Revolution's leader Toussaint L'Ouverture, published in 1931 in the Trinidad-based journal *The Beacon* that James had co-founded some years earlier.[37] In this article, "The Intelligence of the Negro," James recounts the biography of Toussaint L'Ouverture and the events of the Haitian Revolution—"the only successful slave revolt in history," in James's memorable phrase—in order to militate against a forgetting of black efforts for self-determination.[38]

James would revisit the history of Haiti not long after publishing his 1931 essay. In 1934, now in London, he composed a playscript on the same theme; *Toussaint Louverture: The Story of the Only Successful Slave Revolt in History* was given in 1936 in London at the 730-seat Westminster Theatre on the fringes of London's West End. The production featured black professional actors from across the African diaspora, including the famous American actor and singer Paul Robeson in the title role.[39] For several months in 1936, James involved himself

---

[35] Philip Kaisary, *The Haitian Revolution in the Literary Imagination: Radical Horizons, Conservative Constraints* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014). On Lorraine Hansberry, see Jeremy Matthew Glick, *The Black Radical Tragic: Performance, Aesthetics, and the Unfinished Haitian Revolution* (New York: New York University Press, 2016), 170–97. On Wyclef Jean, see Régine Michelle Jean-Charles, "The Myth of Diaspora Exceptionalism: Wyclef Jean Performs *Jaspora*," *American Quarterly* 66, no. 3 (September 2014): 835–52; and George Lipsitz, "Breaking the Silence: The Fugees and 'The Score,'" *Journal of Haitian Studies* 12, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 4–23; and H. Louise Davis, "Commodity Substitution: The Charity Music Video as Effective Fundraising Tool," *Journal of Popular Culture* 48, no. 6 (December 2015): 1211–1231.
[36] Glick, *The Black Radical Tragic*, 5.
[37] See Aldon Lynn Nielsen, *C.L.R. James: A Critical Introduction* (Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi Press, 2010), 5–8.
[38] The essay is reprinted in C.L.R. James, *Toussaint Louverture*, ed. Christian Høgsbjerg, 189–98. James uses the phrase "the only successful slave revolt in history" somewhat later as the subtitle of his 1934 play script; see below.
[39] Høgsbjerg, Introduction to *Toussaint Louverture*, 25. Except for one scene, which was published in *Life and Letters Today* in 1936, James's 1934 playscript was presumed lost until the discovery of a draft copy in 2005. The

heavily with preparations for the performances, not least because he found the collaboration with Paul Robeson profoundly inspiring.[40] As Christian Høgsbjerg shows, the performances of James's *Toussaint* in London in 1936 coincided with the release in cinemas of the British film *Rhodes of Africa* and postdated by less than a year the invasion of the sovereign African state of Ethiopia (then called Abyssinia) by Italian military under the fascist dictator Mussolini. The success of James's play reflected its timeliness: "[*Toussaint*] not only represented a much needed antidote to such imperial propaganda [as *Rhodes of Africa*], but also symbolised in an important sense the Ethiopian resistance to Mussolini."[41]

James followed the production of *Toussaint Louverture* directly by writing an expansive history of the Haitian Revolution, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, published in London in 1938. If James's 1934 play is "panoramic in its dramatisation of the Haitian Revolution… [with scenes] ranging from vodou rituals in the forests of colonial Saint-Domingue to a skillful reenactment of the French Convention… and to Napoleon Bonaparte in his apartment declaring his desire to restore slavery," as Christian Høgsbjerg suggests, James's 1938 history *The Black Jacobins* takes this attention to detail and a thematic scrutiny of transatlantic political economies much further.[42] As David Scott

---

version in *Life and Letters Today* is reproduced in James, *Toussaint Louverture*, ed. Christian Høgsbjerg, 135–54. There are several differences between that version of the scene and the scene as it appears in the full draft copy of the play. Christian Høgsbjerg's critical edition of the play, published in 2012, makes James's text available in print for the first time, and the secondary literature on James awaits a full consideration of James's 1934 draft. See Glick, *The Black Radical Tragic*, 235 n6. Also see Fionnghuala Sweeney, "The Haitian Play: C.L.R. James' *Toussaint Louverture* (1936)," *International Journal of Francophone Studies* 14, nos. 1–2 (2011): 143–63.

[40] Robeson stole the show, according to James's memoir. See C.L.R. James, "Paul Robeson: Black Star [1970]," in C.L.R. James, *Spheres of Existence: Selected Writings*, vol. 2 (London: Allison & Busby, 1980), 258, as quoted in Høgsbjerg, Introduction to C.L.R. James, *Toussaint Louverture*, 33–34 n64. Also see Glick, *Black Radical Tragic*, 118–23.

[41] Høgsbjerg, Introduction to C.L.R. James, *Toussaint Louverture*, 26.

[42] *Ibid*., 10.

summarizes, *The Black Jacobins* retells in uncompromising precision "the revolutionary story of the self-emancipation of New World Slaves":

> It records, in turn, the violence accompanying the capture and transportation of the slaves across the Middle Passage and the depraved social conditions in which they lives and worked on the sugar plantations; the location of slave-grown sugar in the emergence of a global economy; the dependence of French capital on slave labor; the colonial reverberations of the French Revolution; the slave revolt initiated by Boukman [one of the early leaders of the slave revolt] in the summer of 1791; and the dramatic rise to eminence of Toussaint of Bréda and his supreme leadership over the rebellious forces… It is the story of his personality, his almost obsessive self-consciousness and willful determination, and his transformation from a man of decisive action into a man assailed by a crippling uncertainty that leads to his betrayal and eventual arrest and deportation into exile and death in France.[43]

As Scott concludes, James's *The Black Jacobins* of 1938 thus takes the form of a "revolutionary epic."[44]

Yet, in its original 1938 version, the final pages of *The Black Jacobins* shift the text's focus on Toussaint L'Ouverture toward what was for James in the 1930s the pressing task of African decolonization, not least given the failure and refusal of Western allied countries to oppose Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia/Abyssinia in 1936, events which James discussed at the time in an article for the (British-based) League of Coloured Peoples journal *The Keys* entitled "Abyssinia and the Imperialists" (1936).[45] Mussolini's African mission seemed to many anticolonialists like James to represent a lamentable retrenchment of European imperialism at a time when sparks of nonwhite anticolonial organizing were beginning to catch fire in several colonies of the British Empire (in colonial India, for example, sporadic movements of civil

[43] Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity*, 9–10. "Bréda" was apparently the name of the San Domingo sugar plantation on which Toussaint was enslaved. Recently, it has been suggested that Toussaint was freed some time around 1777 and worked on the plantation as a salaried employee responsible for organizing the enslaved workforce. See Madison Smartt Bell, *Toussaint L'Ouverture: A Biography* (New York: Pantheon, 2007), 24–25.
[44] Scott, *ibid*., 9–10.
[45] On James's "Abyssinia and the Imperialists" (1936), see Høgsbjerg, *C.L.R. James in Imperial Britain*, 100.

disobedience and "Non-Cooperation" coalesced into the famous Salt March against British rule in 1930). Thus, the 1938 version of James's epic ends with an "appeal" to the "blacks of Africa," whom James insists are now "more advanced, nearer ready [for anticolonial insurrection] than the slaves of San Domingo."[46] Here, James reinterprets the Haitian Revolution as the basis of a prophesy for the colonized of Africa:

> While if to-day one were to suggest to any white colonial potentate that among those blacks [in Africa] whom they rule are men so infinitely superior in ability, energy, range of vision, and tenacity of purpose that in a hundred years' time these white would be remembered only because of their contact with the blacks, one would get some idea of what the Counts, Marquises, and other colonial magnates of the day thought of Jean-François, Toussaint, and Rigaud when the [Haitian] revolt first began.[47]

Thus, in the final lines of the 1938 text, James's expresses his hope for "the African people" in the form of a prophesy: "The African faces a long and difficult road and he will need guidance. But he will tread it fast because he will walk upright."[48] The end of European colonialism in Africa will be an African affair, James maintains, and for that very reason it will be thoroughly civilized. Thus, as it looks ahead to a golden age of black African self-determination, the 1938 version of *The Black Jacobins* ends with a romantic portrayal of the victory of the colonized over European colonialism and their

[46] James, *The Black Jacobins* (1938; rev. 1963), 376.
[47] *Ibid*., 376.
[48] *Ibid*., 377. The "advice" to would-be African revolutionaries that James considers is necessary for African revolution includes Western radical (i.e. Marxist) ideas and writings, which he compares to heretical eighteenth-century European emancipationist texts: "From the people heaving in action will come the leaders; not the isolated blacks [such as medical doctors] at Guy's Hospital [in London] or the Sorbonne, the dabblers in *surréalisme* or the lawyers, but the quiet recruits in a black police force, the sergeant in the French native army or British police, familiarising himself with military tactics and strategy, reading a stray pamphlet of Lenin or Trotsky as Toussaint read the [emancipationist writings of] Abbé Raynal." *Ibid*., 377.

ultimate vindication via a magnanimous repudiation of imperialist notions of black savagery.[49]

In 1963, the publication in New York of a new and revised edition of James's *The Black Jacobins* not only made available in paperback a text that had been out of print and largely forgotten for many years; it also allowed James the opportunity to reassert his sagacity and relevance on the global stage as a radical anticolonial Pan-African thinker.[50] James's revised version of the text included a new essay, "From Toussaint L'Ouverture to Fidel Castro."[51] Marked in the 1963 revised version of the *The Black Jacobins* as an "appendix," James's essay aims to update the volume's anticolonial politics by highlighting the recent victory of communist revolution in Cuba in 1959 that James hoped would presage an anticolonial "future of the West Indies, all of them."[52] Whereas the African continent preoccupies James in 1938, James's appendix repurposes the text, in David Scott's words, as a "historiographical gift to the (then) emerging postcolonial Caribbean nation-states."[53] In the new appendix, James takes pains to ensure that his readers do not infer a trivial connection between Toussaint and Fidel Castro, as if the only similarity between the two men lies in their status as revolutionary leaders within the

---

[49] On James's "vindicationism," see Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity*, esp. 81–83. James's vision of black African superiority, rectitude and sovereignty actually contrasts with his depiction of Haitian insurrection earlier in the text, where he weaves in some coy advice to the future African revolutionaries whom he imagines among his readers: "the massacre of the [San Domingo] whites [on the command of Toussaint's successor, Dessalines] was a tragedy; not for the whites. For these old slave-owners… there is no need to waste one tear or one drop of ink. The tragedy was for the blacks… It was not policy but revenge, and revenge has no place in politics." James, *The Black Jacobins*, 373. James warns, in other words, that revolution in Africa would be counterproductive were it to result in mindless devastation and destruction.

[50] In the early 1950s, his ultimately-unsuccessful attempt to avoid expulsion from the United States under threat from "anti-communist" purges by HUAC (the House [of Representatives] Un-American Activities Committee) saw James write a literary study of Herman Melville, as if to demonstrate his sufficiently "American" credentials and his ability to distance himself from anticolonial politics and movements of and in the global South. See Bill Schwartz, "C.L.R. James's *American Civilization*," in *Beyond Boundaries*, ed. Christopher Gair, 128–56; and James Zeigler, *Red Scare Racism and Cold War Black Radicalism* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2015), 97–145.

[51] James, *The Black Jacobins* (1938; rev. 1963), 391–418.

[52] James, Preface (1963) to *The Black Jacobins* (1938; rev. 1963), n.p.

[53] Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity*, 107.

arbitrary discursive boundaries of a Caribbean area studies; the connection between Toussaint and Fidel Castro is their experience of, and contribution to modernity.[54] As Scott writes, James's 1963 appendix in *The Black Jacobins* argues that:

> [T]he Caribbean begins in modernity… the ordering structure of power and reason that constitutes colonial modernity. The Caribbean… is not merely modern; it is modern in a fundamentally inaugural way. And it is this inaugural modernity, he [James] suggests, that lends to the Caribbean its distinctive (perhaps distinctively paradoxical) character. For James of the appendix it is this fact of the founding modernity of the Caribbean, more than any other, which shaped the common experience of both Toussaint Louverture and Fidel Castro…
>
> [T]he Caribbean is the paradigmatic instance of the colonial encounter. And this is not merely because it was the earliest non-European instance of it, but because it has been shaped almost entirely by that founding experience…
>
> [I]f that modernity is a founding experience for the Caribbean, then plantation slavery is the fundamental institution through which that experience is shaped and articulated. For James, the sugar plantation constituted a disciplinary and regulatory regime that, as he says, "imposed a pattern" on the West Indies, one that was neither European nor African, nor indeed American.[55]

As Scott concludes, "the fundamental importance of this [1963] appendix is that in it James deliberately alters the focus of our attention *away* from the reverential anticolonial story of their revolutionary heroism and toward the conditions—those principally created by slavery and the plantation—that gave distinctive shape to the political projects they undertook in making the futures they made."[56] James stresses here that "the Negroes [of the Caribbean]… from the very start lived a life that was in its essence a modern life."[57] Part of Scott's aim in his argument about James's 1963 appendix is to undermine criticism of James's—and Toussaint's—Eurocentricism in their reading and application of radical Western texts (such as those by Marx and Trotsky, in James's case, and, reputedly, writing by the French emancipationist Abbé Raynal, in the case of

---

[54] *Ibid*., 124–31.
[55] *Ibid*., 125–26.
[56] *Ibid*., 131. Emphasis original.
[57] James, *The Black Jacobins* (1938; rev. 1963), 392.

Toussaint): Toussaint and the Haitian Revolution he led were made in the Caribbean and therefore within specifically modern conditions that were constituted by, and constitutive of the European enlightenment.

Thus, James's 1963 appendix shifts the focus of *The Black Jacobins* away from the original version's final, enduring image of the essential superiority and rectitude of black peoples and toward the messy and fundamental (or, in Scott's terms, "inaugural") modernity of the Caribbean. For James of 1963, the colonized and their descendants could no longer "walk upright" along the "long and difficult road" to self-determination without simultaneously dancing with Western politics and power. The double-bind of anticolonial nationalism, by which the new state of decolonization threatens to mimic the violence of imperial governance, offers plenty of opportunities for downfall and degradation.[58] James's 1963 appendix bears witness to the violence of the anticolonial state under Toussaint's successor Dessalines, the first leader of independent Haiti: "Dessalines was a barbarian."[59]

This significant shift of emphasis that the 1963 appendix bestows on *The Black Jacobins* of 1938 is reflected in several differences between James's two stage adaptations of the history of the Haitian Revolution: his play *Toussaint Louverture* (1934), first performed in 1936, and its subsequent revision in a play entitled *The Black Jacobins* that James co-wrote with fellow Trinidadian Dexter Lyndersay in the mid 1960s. Premiered at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria in 1967, *The Black Jacobins* play was subsequently produced by the BBC for the BBC Radio 4 series *Monday Play* in 1971, and first staged in London in 1986 in a production by the black

[58] See Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*, 2nd ed. (London: Zed Books, 1993), 30.
[59] James, *The Black Jacobins* (1938; rev. 1963), 393.

theater organization the Talawa Theatre Company.[60] While *The Black Jacobins* play essentially follows the same chronological structure as *Toussaint Louverture*, the change in the play's title, as Glick suggests, bespeaks James's "effort to prioritize collective movement" over a focus on Toussaint as individual leader (even though, as we have seen, James's panoramic dramaturgy in the earlier play already exceeds a character study).[61]

The Black Jacobins play affords greater emphasis upon the ordinary black slaves: the play's lavishly extensive stage directions specify at the start that "crowds say little but their presence is felt powerfully at all critical moments. This is the key point of the play."[62] Furthermore, *The Black Jacobins* play augments the earlier play's representation of other leaders of the Haitian Revolution by introducing the new character of Moïse, Toussaint's adopted nephew and later a general in Toussaint's army. Portrayed as more radical than Toussaint, Moïse voices a withering critique of Toussaint directly before he is executed on Toussaint's orders: "Pitiful old Toussaint… you will remain just an old man with a dream of an impossible fraternity."[63] This new cynicism reappears with full force at the end of the play. Whereas the 1934 version of the play concludes with cries of "wild cheering" from the freed blacks and a rousing speech by Dessalines, Toussaint's successor as leader of the Haitian Revolution, on the bright future of a "free and independent… Haiti" that belongs to all "the blacks… and our

---

[60] The 1986 Talawa production was directed by Yvonne Brewster. See Anna Grimshaw, ed., *The C.L.R. James Reader*, 423–24, n6. Also see Yvonne Brewster, "Talawa Theatre Company 1985–2002," in *Staging New Britain: Aspects of Black and South Asian Theatre Practice*, eds. Geoffrey V. Davis and Anne Fuchs (Brussels, Belgium: Peter Lang, 2006), 87–106; and Victor Ukaegbu, "Talawa Theatre Company: The "Likkle" Matter of Black Creativity and Representation on the British Stage," in *Alternatives within the Mainstream: British Black and Asian Theatres*, ed. Dimple Godiwala (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006), 123–52. For information on the BBC radio production and broadcast, see *Radio Plays & Radio Drama* online database, http://www.suttonelms.org.uk/RADIO1.HTML.

[61] Glick, *Black Radical Tragic*, 86.

[62] James, *The Black Jacobins*, in *The C.L.R. James Reader*, 67–111; 68.

[63] James, *The Black Jacobins*, 96.

mulatto brothers,"[64] *The Black Jacobins* play of 1967 ends with confusion: Dessalines, now a corrupt tyrant, reacts to the sudden news of Toussaint's death by calling a halt to the crowd's mourning, proclaiming himself "Emperor," and selecting as his "Empress" the former "mulatto slave" Marie-Jean, who remains "mystified" ("Empress of what?").[65] Changes to the play such as these indicate the influence on James's revised thinking of anticolonial politics in the 1960s, especially his newfound skepticism regarding triumphant or "reverential" narratives of "revolutionary heroism," as demonstrated in his 1963 appendix to *The Black Jacobins* history. Thus, in James's 1967 play, the Haitian Revolution emerges as a thoroughly modern project that can no longer access an unalloyed premodern clarity of purpose and magnanimity of deed.

***

While James hardly mentions music in *The Black Jacobins* history, music plays an important role in the dramaturgy of both plays *Toussaint Louverture* and *The Black Jacobins*.[66] Using quotations from Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni*, as well as renditions of French songs of liberty (such as the "Marseillaise") and the drumming and singing of vodou ceremonies, each play constructs an elaborate musical soundtrack that counterpoints with the dialogue and stage business. Christian Høgsbjerg compares *Toussaint Louverture*'s dramatic aesthetic, including its use of music, to similar developments in black and radical theatre in imperial Britain:

> While James was perhaps encouraged by such movements as the Group Theatre and the unapologetically amateur Workers' Theatre Movement around the Communist Party, one suspects his vision of political theater was on a far grander scale. It was closer to that of a less well-known third artistic current among British socialist playwrights, the Left Theatre group. Formed in 1934, it tried to

[64] James, *Toussaint Louverture*, 132–33.
[65] James, *The Black Jacobins*, 110. See Høgsbjerg, Introduction to C.L.R. James, *Toussaint Louverture*, 27–28.
[66] In *The Black Jacobins* history of 1938, James mentions "music" exactly three times—as part of the local color of French colonial rule of Saint-Domingue, for example where "the sound of martial music" attends to the arrival of the French military leader Rochambeau, who "brought 1500 dogs to hunt down the blacks." James, *The Black Jacobins* (1938; rev. 1963), 359.

> bring some of the more sophisticated European developments in theatre—pioneered by the likes of Berthold Brecht and Ernst Toller—to England. The Left Theatre group was searching for creative new forms of political theatre, and it aspired to "Total Theatre," combining dance, music, and drama—and James's *Toussaint Louverture* might be best seen as in this mould.[67]

While Høgsbjerg cannot confirm the direct influence of The Left Theatre group on James or *vice versa*, a socialist aesthetic of "Total Theatre" helps illuminate James's use of music in *Toussaint Louverture*, as well as his revised version of the play of the 1960s. Furthermore, James's use of music in these plays gainsays the almost complete lack of remarks on music in the rest of James's vast oeuvre. Yet in an interview with his biographer Paul Buhle in 1987, James recounted his eclectic knowledge of music from his early years in Trinidad in the 1920s. Asked about his experiences of music at this time, James recounted: "I was very curious. I was a classical man, but I was a calypso man too… In the 1920s I had a little box, a gramophone. I was listening to Debussy, Mozart's piano concertos and so on."[68] This simultaneity of different musical styles in the Caribbean colony makes its way into James's plays on the Haitian Revolution, both of which quote Mozart's music as well as black Atlantic or Pan-African musical traditions.

Set on "the verandah of [the French colonial officer] M[onsieur] Bullet's villa," the first scene of *Toussaint* unfolds a synchronic musical juxtaposition that underscores the blundering, contrapuntal organization of colonial Caribbean life. In the immediate background ("in the villa," perhaps in the salon or drawing room), the minuet from Mozart's *Don Giovanni* is played, possibly on the piano. At the same time, communal drumming emanates from the far

[67] Høgsbjerg, Introduction to C.L.R. James, *Toussaint Louverture*, 19.
[68] C.L.R. James and Paul Buhle, "The Making of a Literary Life: C.L.R. James Interviewed by Paul Buhle," in *C.L.R. James's Caribbean*, eds. Paget Henry and Paul Buhle (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 56–62; 59.

background, as James's stage directions specify: "All through the scene there is a faint but insistent beating of drums… in moments of tenseness the drums beat louder and with accelerated rhythm, though they remain always in the distance."[69] Whereas the drumming perhaps denotes the African roots of the enslaved black Haitian masses, the minuet originates in the ballroom scene of the Act I finale of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, where it provides the music for a dance exclusively by the opera's aristocratic characters.[70] Although in this scene black slaves attend to the French colonial officers in almost total silence, the musical soundtrack establishes from the start a volatile proximity and simultaneity of both elite white European rule and the autonomous agency of black community.[71] As it overlays these two contrasting musics, the scene introduces the play's thematic focus on the transnational conditions of imperialist political economies and their triangulation in the imperial periphery, in which a Pan-African blackness converges with the global rule of a white European elite.

References to Mozart opera continue to serve in *Toussaint* as musical markers of European aristocratic status and as points of contrast with the enslaved black population of the island. Later in the first scene, Bullet mentions Mozart by name and his plans to attend performances of Mozart operas. As the minuet from *Don Giovanni* "begins again" in the background, Bullet announces: "The ladies… are fascinated by the music of a new composer. One Mozart—a German. We intend to hear his operas in Paris this winter."[72] By doing so, he

[69] James, *Toussaint Louverture*, 49.
[70] The minuet is danced by Donna Anna, Donna Elvira, Don Ottavio, and Don Giovanni, while the servant Leporello and the peasant Masetto dance a rustic Teitsch or German Dance, and Don Giovanni and the peasant girl Zerlina dance together a contredanse that, in Julian Rushton's estimation, is "neither aristocratic nor merely bucolic, but a middle ground on which these two meet." Julian Rushton, *W. A. Mozart: Don Giovanni* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 16.
[71] On the "proximity" and "crushing nearness" of violence in the European colony, see Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010), xvii–xviii.
[72] James, *Toussaint Louverture*, 53.

boasts of his and his family's refined, metropolitan, European tastes and connections, despite their current colonial assignment to Saint-Domingue. Likewise, in the next scene (Act I, Scene 2), the thematic associations of the background drumming become clearer. Set in "the depths of the forest," the scene features several leaders of the Haitian revolt—Boukman, Dessalines, Jeannot, and Toussaint—as well as "groups of Negro slaves." "All through the scene there is a steady beat of drums," as James's stage directions indicate.[73] The scene ends with Boukman's stirring speech to the assembled slaves, as the drumming in the background "quicken[s]" and finally surges to "a great rattle": "Throw away the symbol of the god of the whites who have so often caused us to weep, and listen to the voice of liberty, which speaks to us through our hearts."[74] This scene indicates that, in James's 1934 play, revolution will arise out of what he referred to in the 1938 history *The Black Jacobins* as the Haitian "sub-soil," an autonomous Pan-African culture of insurrection that "made Toussaint" and kept alive the promise of black self-determination. By contrast, the play's quotations of Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni* sharply delineate the black Haitian masses from the French colonialists and identify the latter with white European social arrangements that are rigidly striated by class.

The use of music in *The Black Jacobins* play of 1967 differs considerably from James's earlier 1934 version of the play; changes to the narrative and dramaturgy of the later play, including its revised uses of music, reflect and augment James's reassessments of anticolonial politics in the post-World War II period. In particular, the 1967 play deploys quotations of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* more extensively and in more complex ways. After a new Prologue featuring a chain-gang of slaves "singing" as they toil at night in the fields, Act I begins, as in the

[73] James, *Toussaint Louverture*, 54.
[74] James, *Toussaint Louverture*, 55; 56.

earlier version of the play, in Bullet's villa. Yet, instead of the minuet from *Don Giovanni*, we hear another passage from Mozart's opera: "Madame Bullet is playing a Mozart aria on the piano and singing it. The aria is from Don Giovanni, Act 1: 'Vendetta ti chieggio, la chiede il tuo cor.'"[75] The play's translation of Donna Anna's Act 1 aria in the mouth of Madame Bullet foregrounds the question of vengeance through repetition: "I demand revenge of you, your heart demands it… I demand revenge of you, your heart demands it."[76] Standing by Madame Bullet at the piano, female "mulatto slave" Marie-Jeanne is also "humming, sometimes singing, a phrase when it is often repeated, perhaps in descant."[77]

Glick argues that the Mozart aria functions in the play "as a structuring agent," especially to signal themes of conspiracy and revenge.[78] For instance, Marie-Jeanne later "hums to herself snatches of [the aria]" after she returns from consulting with Hédouville, a general of the French army. Here, Marie-Jeanne's humming of the Mozart aria coincides with her discovery of Dessalines's plot to capture and usurp Toussaint. As Glick writes, the play's use of this aria from *Don Giovanni* "extracts and amplifies the revenge kernel of the opera and endlessly repeats it, paralleling his [later] play's Haitian combatants' honing in on *liberté*, employing such *liberté* in the service of their own radical use."[79] Glick continues:

> [James's use of the Mozart aria in this play] represents a global import of liberation culture as material force shaped and utilized by the Haitian masses…. [It] works as an ever-proliferating vengeance machine folded into the dramatic fabric of *The Black Jacobins* [play]. Ripped from its initial context [in Mozart's opera], it serves as a musical theatrical fodder within Haitian revolutionary theatrical settling of scores.[80]

---

[75] James, *The Black Jacobins*, 71.
[76] *Ibid.,* 71–72.
[77] *Ibid.,* 72.
[78] Glick, *Black Radical Tragic*, 99.
[79] *Ibid.,* 100.
[80] *Ibid.,* 100.

In other words, James's later version of the play allows Mozart's music to seep into the lives and anticolonial organizing of the island's enslaved, black inhabitants, quite unlike the way in which opera is confined to the white colonialists in the earlier play *Toussaint Louverture*. Moreover, its origination in *Don Giovanni* as a showpiece female revenge aria works to support the later play's increased attention to the roles and experiences of women in the Haitian Revolution.[81]

Yet, Glick may not be correct to suggest that Marie-Jeanne's humming of "Vendetta ti chieggio" is the "final iteration of Mozart" in *The Black Jacobins* play.[82] While the *Don Giovanni* aria replaces the *Don Giovanni* minuet at the start of Act 1, the minuet appears at the end of the play. Although there is nothing in James's 1967 text to suggest that this must be the minuet from *Don Giovanni*, the placement of a minuet in the play's final scene of the revised play echoes the inclusion of the minuet from *Don Giovanni* that begins the 1934 *Toussaint Louverture* play. Given that they removed the *Don Giovanni* minuet from the first scene of play to make way for the revenge aria, James and his co-writer Dexter Lyndersay perhaps had the minuet from *Don Giovanni* in mind when specified a minuet later in the play.

As we have seen, *The Black Jacobins* play ends not with Dessalines's and the Haitian people's simple victory over colonialism, as in *Toussaint Louverture*, but with uncertainty, tyranny, and, in the case of Dessalines's chosen "Empress," bewilderment. Dessalines's coronation as "Emperor of Haiti" coincides with news of Toussiant's death in prison in France. Dessalines and his consort exuberantly toast "the new state of Haiti," only to hear the crowds outside singing a song of mourning for Toussaint that James refers to as "the Samedi Smith

[81] As Høgbsjerg writes, in *The Black Jacobins* play of 1967, "James seems more conscious of the experience of women during the Haitian Revolution, whether being sexually abused by cruel slaveowners or engaging in relationships with the likes of Toussaint and Dessalines." Høgsbjerg, Introduction to C.L.R. James, *Toussaint Louverture*, 28.
[82] Glick, *Black Radical Tragic*, 98.

song."[83] Several scenes earlier, Dessalines has already demonstrated his vexation at the singing of this song, when he earlier orders the crowd to stop singing it: "Absolutely not… No Voodooo. Anybody in my detachment who practices Voodoo will be shot on the spot. No Voodoo and none of that drumming."[84] Here, however, he becomes even angrier, not least because the crowd's rendition of the Samedi Smith song "in the style of a mournful chant" threatens to upstage his self-coronation.[85] Hoping to put an end to the singing outside, Dessalines demands a performance of a minuet, as if to muffle the sounds of the communal singing outside with music redolent of the European aristocracy:

> DESSALINES: Where is the music I asked for? *(Two violinists, a flautist and a mandolinist step forward.)* A minuet! And play it loudly!… I am not only a soldier of many campaigns. I am a fine dancer. Marie-Jeanne, allow me. *(Dessalines and Marie-Jeanne make some steps by suddenly the low singing outside… is replaced by a murmur growing into a tumult. Marat enters and whispers news which spreads rapidly from person to person that the musicians stop playing the minuet. Dessalines falters in the dance.)* What is it? Play on. *(Marat steps forward.)*
> MARAT: Emperor, the news just came. Toussaint is dead. He died in prison… *(There is consternation in the room… The crowd outside have started to sing Samedi Smith's song in the style of a mournful chant. Everybody looks at Dessalines.)*
> DESSALINES: Toussaint L'Ouverture could have been king of San Domingo… I am sorry for him, but we can't do anything about it now. Music there! *(As the minuet hesitantly begins, he steps forward and almost forcibly takes the hand of the weeping Marie-Jeanne to continue the dance. As the lights begin to fade around the periphery of the dance, there is gradual movement off [stage]…*

---

[83] James, *The Black Jacobins*, 110. James names Samedi Smith in *The Black Jacobins* history of 1938 as one of several "nameless petty chieftains" of the Haitian uprising. James *The Black Jacobins* (1938; rev. 1963), 337. Also see Carolyn E. Fick, *The Making of Haiti: The Saint Domingue Revolution from Below* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 225. Baron Samedi has since become a central deity in the Haitian vodou pantheon, considered the be a spirit of the dead and the guide over cemeteries and crossroads, and James perhaps had this figure in mind when he revised the play in 1967. James perhaps derived his knowledge of "the Samedi Smith song" from an influential prewar study of Haitian culture by anthropologist Harold Courlander. See Harold Courlander, *Haiti Singing* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1939), 88–90. An illustration of Baron Samedi also appears in Alfred Métraux's landmark study of Haitian culture. See Alfred Métraux, *Voodoo in Haiti*, trans. Hugo Charteris (London: A. Deutsch, 1959), Plate 3 (n.p.).
[84] James, *The Black Jacobins*, 102.
[85] *Ibid.,* 111.

The musicians then flee… Marie-Jeanne and Dessalines freeze in a final tableau as the lights fade).

THE END.[86]

Enthralled by the music and culture of the European colonial rulers, Dessalines finally betrays the black Haitian masses by forcing the music and dance of a minuet upon the occasion of Toussaint's *ad hoc* funeral.[87] Tellingly, the instrumentalists soon abandon their posts, despite Dessalines's protestations and commands to the contrary ("Music there!"); any comfort and cover that the minuet affords him cannot last.

While European opera has seeped into the lives and minds of the Haitians under colonialism, providing a powerful script for the vengeance of anticolonial *liberté*, it has also become a dangerous drug that those already inebriated by newfound power consume in intoxicating amounts. The first act of the play has shown that opera's tropes and episodes of vengeance can perform powerful work in the minds and mouths of the colonized, while the final scene discloses and warns against the despotic potential of the decolonized nation, particularly when its leaders become absorbed by the fruits or cultural trappings of imperialist political economies. In the play's "final tableau," James leaves open the possibility that Dessalines and Marie-Jeanne, now alone, apprehend the perils of an anticolonial nationalism that mimics too closely the styles and orders of imperial power.[88] Those who have abandoned Dessalines and Marie-Jeanne, including the musicians, and perhaps join the mourning crowds outside Dessalines's unofficial headquarters herald a new black nation that exceeds the capacity of

[86] James, *The Black Jacobins*, 111.
[87] Kevin Meehan, "Romance and Revolution: Reading Women's Narratives of Caribbean Decolonization," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 25, no. 2 (Fall 2006): 291–306; 292.
[88] See Terence Ranger, "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa," in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric J. Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 211–62.

Dessalines's lifeless, Europeanized postcolonial state-formation.[89] In any case, the "final tableau" permits the audience (or reader) to perceive how, as Edward Said writes in a different context, "imperialism is a system. Life in one subordinate realm of experience is imprinted by the fictions and follies of the dominant realm."[90] Indeed, by the end of the play, the postcolony of Haiti is poised to remain a messy and modern admixture at the triangulation point of white European metropolitan culture and a resistance to the same in form of an atavistic compulsion toward native communality.

Thus, *The Black Jacobins* play does not propose simply to locate an alternative, more successful postcolonial governance within a reconstructed premodern return to a black Pan-African Haitian communal culture. The "Samedi Smith song" that the Haitian crowd use to express their sorrow at the death of Toussiant actually originates with the French military, as an earlier scene tells us. Upon the first appearance of the song, Christophe, one of the leaders of the Haitian revolt, explains to Dessalines that the Haitian soldiers have adopted the song from the French: "The [Haitian] brigands sing it. It is their song now. They used to sing 'La Marseillaise' and the 'Ça Ira' but the French soldiers always sing those, so the brigands have started to sing this *as their song*."[91] Dessalines hears the words being sung and provides an English translation:

> DESSALINES: This is it, Christophe *(He half-sings…)*
> *A l'attaque, brave soldat,*
> *Et qui périt, c'est son affaire,*
> *A l'attaque, grenadier,*
> *Et qui va tomber, reste sur la terre…*
> To the attack, brave solider,
> Who gets killed is his affair,
> To the attack, grenadier,

[89] On the "excess" of nationalism beyond the anticolonial state, see David Lloyd, *Anomalous States: Irish Writing and the Postcolonial Moment* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), esp. 89.
[90] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), xix.
[91] James, *The Black Jacobins*, 102. Emphasis added.

And whoever falls remains on the ground.[92]

Christophe then supplies Dessalines with an interpretation of the song: it "means voodoo," he warns, while Dessalines seems only too happy to accept this as an excuse to remonstrate against "voodoo and… drumming" wherever it is to be found.[93] Thus, although Christophe recounts the origins of the "Samedi Smith song" in the rank and file of the French military, he also willfully misreads it as an element of "voodoo" practices rather than a song borrowed from the French.[94] While the Marseillaise and "Ça Ira" have become too heavily tarnished by association with the French colonial troops, "A l'attaque, brave soldat," provisionally retitled "The Samedi Smith Song," can still serve as an anthem of the new Haitian nation, ready at any time for reinterpretation by the Haitian people as a "mournful chant" that perhaps draws on and incorporates vodou beliefs in the deity Baron Samedi, a vodou spirit of the dead.[95] The thoroughly modern moment of Caribbean decolonization inaugurates vodou practices of mourning, even as a "sub-soil" of vodou mythology constitutes the new nation.

***

James's 1963 appendix for the revised reissue of *The Black Jacobins* history ends with a brief discussion of what James refers to as "the West Indian national identity."[96] James argues that a redemptive anticolonial nationalism of the West Indies can be "glimpsed in the published writings of West Indian authors": he mentions George Lamming, Vidiadhar Surajprasad "V.S." Naipaul, and Wilson Harris, all of whom migrated from the Caribbean to Britain in the early

[92] *Ibid.,* 102.
[93] *Ibid.,* 102.
[94] Likewise, Nicole King identifies the "Samedi Smith song" as a "Vodun melody." Nicole King, *C.L.R. James and Creolization: Circles of Influence* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2011), 40.
[95] See King, *C.L.R. James and Creolization*, 40.
[96] James, *The Black Jacobins* (1938; rev. 1963), 413.

1950s. Almost as an afterthought, James concedes that his study of Caribbean cultural production in the contemporary, postcolonial period has been all too brief: "There is no space here to deal with the poet in the literary tradition, or the ballad singer. In dance, in the innovation in musical instruments, in popular ballad singing unrivalled anywhere in the world, the mass of people are not seeking a national identity, they are expressing one."[97] For James, the moment of decolonization coincides with the creation and expression of a Caribbean culture; this Caribbean culture remains the prerogative of the people of the Caribbean, by which James means the descendants of black African slaves, but it does not resuscitate a premodern African way of life: with this Caribbean culture, James states emphatically, "the West Indians have brought something new" and have done so not as period actors in a precolonial drama but within "the middle of our disturbed [twentieth] century."[98] James seems fascinated by the concept of cultural production that is at once Caribbean, transnational, and modern, yet the brevity of his remarks, as well as his use of outdated terms such as "ballad singer," betray a survey of Caribbean culture with a reach more powerful than its grasp. The following section offers a fuller consideration of black radical cultural production in postcolonial Britain. More specifically, it charts the emergence of concepts of *minority culture* within anticolonial and radical antiracist organizing, and it illustrates how black radicalism in Britain reimagined British opera as provincial.

As well as the wider topic of black radical cultural production, the following section focuses in particular on *The Arts Britain Ignores: The Arts of Ethnic Minorities in Britain* (1976), an extensive study of the performing arts of racialized communities in Britain by the independent researcher and prominent community-of-color activist Naseem Khan. The first in-depth survey

[97] *Ibid.,* 417.
[98] *Ibid.,* 417.

of cultural production by British people of color, *The Arts Britain Ignores* set the terms for a series of subsequent reappraisals of British cultural policy, making it one of the most influential pieces of writing on race by a British person of color in postwar British history.[99] I read *The Arts Britain Ignores* as both a study and an artifact of radical black British culture. By examining Khan's references to British opera, I argue that *The Arts Britain Ignores* situates the cultural apparatus of the British welfare state as a widely resonant soundboard for black voices to challenge conditions of racialization in postwar Britain. Thus, Khan's study provides a textual focus for historical analysis by rehearsing the core maneuvers by which people of color constructed an oppositional black identity in public sphere of 1970s Britain.

Provincializing British Opera

Written in the 1960s, James's appendix bespeaks a time of tremendous hope for the future of newly independent nations in the global South; James expresses hope for a "future of the West Indies, all of them," that follows the African continent into black independent rule, as we have seen. During this period, and especially among left-wing and black radical thinking in the West, Third World nationalism was identified paradigmatically with a radical promise of minority culture.[100] As Timothy Brennan argues, the context of rapid decolonization in the 1960s and 1970s witnessed the "conversion of 'culture' to a category of [subaltern] struggle" that began at mid-century with independence movements in the colonized Third World and was extended in

[99] On *The Arts Britain Ignores* as a watershed text, see Andrew Dewdney, David Dibosa, and Victoria Walsh, *Post Critical Museology: Theory and Practice in the Art Museum* (London: Routledge, 2013), 50–51.
[100] Brian Alleyne recounts this history as part of his study of the "New Beacon circle" of black intellectuals and activists in London during the latter third of the twentieth century. See Brian W. Alleyne, *Radicals against Race: Black Activism and Cultural Politics* (New York: Berg, 2002), esp. 21–50. Also see Jane K. Cowan, Marie-Bénédicte Dembour, and Richard A. Wilson, Introduction to *Culture and Rights: Anthropological Perspectives* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 1–26.

the late 1960s and 1970s in the West by "those with personal experience of colonialism as it exists *in Europe*."[101] Moreover, as minority culture was identified with a radical global egalitarianism, a parallel concept of *Eurocentrism* emerged to identify the combination of political, social, and economic capital conferred upon white European metropolitan culture. The point was not only to discredit the notion that the prestige of white European culture and the privileges of white elites were meritocratic, but also to affirm the autonomy, self-determination, and equal value of marginalized cultures and colonized peoples. Culture, in other words, was to be powerfully and materially transformative of imperial conditions. Visual art, literature, theatre, music, street protest, and any kind of cultural performance were understood not simply as the means to illustrate liberatory aspirations, but as the practice of liberation—"of bringing a transformed world into being by performatively (re)constituting communal life."[102] Thus, during the 1960s and 1970s notions of *minority culture* represented the emergence of a key concept in anticolonial and grassroots antiracist organizing, especially in Western countries/the global North. Rejecting orthodox Marxist distinctions between culture and politics, race-based social movements of the time deployed a highly politicized concept of minority culture as a powerful means by which to challenge iniquitous racialized and imperialist divisions between mainstream (or metropolitan) and marginal (or subaltern) life-worlds. Each and every culture was to be "provincialized," returned or rehabilitated to a minor position, albeit with inalienable legitimacy on the world stage.

---

[101] Timothy Brennan, "Black Theorists and Left Antagonists," *Minnesota Review* 37 (Fall 1991): 89–113; 101; 104.
[102] Jodi Melamed, *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 27. Owusu, for example, described the aims of "black arts in Britain" during this period in terms of "building an independent organic cultural infrastructure that combines production and consumption." Kwesi Owusu, *The Struggle for Black Arts in Britain: What Can We Consider Better Than Freedom* (London: Comedia, 1986), 159.

In Britain, race-based social movements that mobilized a radical politics of minority culture emerged in the late 1960s and 1970s. Concentrated in Britain's largest metropolitan centers, this included: groups such as the British Black Panthers, the Caribbean Artists Movement and the Race Today collective; the consolidation of a black British intellectual class; the growth of Rastafarianism and its soundtrack of reggae music; book publishing and distribution organizations such as New Beacon Books and Bogle-L'Ouverture; community newspapers dedicated to aspects of minority and non-Western culture such as the London-based periodicals *Third Text*, *Artrage*, *Samaj in'a Babylon*, and *Black Struggle*; educational initiatives such as the George Padmore Supplementary School and the Black Parents Movement; and the founding of annual public events such as the Notting Hill carnival in London, Chinese National Day in Liverpool, and the Asian Song Contest based in Coventry.[103] As Ashley Dawson has observed, the cultural-material antiracism practiced at a grassroots level in British cities during this period was in step with global decolonization and the task to make minority culture work for economic, psychic, and political decolonization of both postcolonies and the internal colonies within the modern British nation: "in postcolonial Britain," Dawson writes, "resistance to exclusionary nationalism led immigrants and their children to invoke the heritage of

[103] On the emergence of a radical black politics in 1970s British public discourse, see Anne-Marie Angelo, "The Black Panthers in London, 1967–1972: A Diasporic Struggle Navigates the Black Atlantic," *Radical History Review* 103 (Winter 2009): 17–35; Rosalind Eleanor Wild, "'Black Was the Colour of Our Fight': Black Power in Britain, 1955–1976" (Ph.D. dissertation: University of Sheffield, 2008); Brian W. Alleyne, "Anti-Racist Cultural Politics in New-Imperial Britain," in *Utopian Pedagogy: Radical Experiments against Neoliberal Globalization*, eds. Richard J. F Day, Greig De Peuter and Mark Coté (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007); Bill Schwarz, "'Claudia Jones and the *West Indian Gazette*': Reflections on the Emergence of Post-Colonial Britain," *Twentieth Century British History* 14, no. 3 (2003): 264–85; Alleyne, *Radicals Against Race*; A. Sivanandan, "From Resistance to Rebellion," 90–139; and A. J. Stockwell, "Leaders, Dissidents and the Disappointed: Colonial Students in Britain as Empire Ended," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 36, no. 3 (September 2007): 487–507. Also see Owusu, *The Struggle for Black Arts in Britain*; and Pratibha Pramar, "Gender, Race and Class: Asian Women in Resistance," in *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain*, ed. The Centre for Contemporary Culture Studies (London: Hutchinson and Co, 1982), 236–75; A. Sivanandan, "Black Power: The Politics of Existence," *Politics and Society* (February 1971): 225–33; and Obi B. Egbuna, *Destroy This Temple: The Voice of Black Power in England* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1971).

internationalism that developed during anticolonial struggles in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean."[104] Such insurrectionary cultural politics aimed to render visible the way in which white metropolitan elites conferred prestige and value only on the cultural capital that they possessed.[105] At the same time, race-radical oppositional movements understood minority culture to be powerful and materially transformative, the means to install visions of the abundance, dignity, and sovereignty of black and subaltern lives within metropolitan structures of human and cultural value profoundly hostile to the same. In this way, cultural-material activism became the primary means for racialized Britons in the late 1960s and 1970s to put communal goals of self-determination into practice and to challenge a racial order in postwar Britain that had consigned racialized citizens to "the new Empire within."

Scholars of British postcoloniality have noted the importance of postwar migration patterns for understanding the rise of minority culture as subaltern politics. While global decolonization provided perhaps the widest frame of reference for radical antiracisms in Britain during this period, writers such as Stuart Hall and Ashley Dawson emphasize the ways in which the emergence of cultural-material antiracisms in Britain during the late 1960s and 1970s coincided with a "new generation" of people of color who came of age into adulthood at this time.[106] During the 1960s, the introduction of a series of racist immigration laws meant that black migration to Britain from the global South had become all but impossible, at least via non-criminalized means and channels. One result of this change was that by the late 1960s and 1970s, young black adults in Britain were for the first time predominantly British-born, rather than born

[104] Ashley Dawson, *Mongrel Nation: Diasporic Culture and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 7.
[105] Alleyne, *Radicals against Race*, 4.
[106] See Dawson, *Mongrel Nation*; and Stuart Hall, "Black Diaspora Artists in Britain: Three 'Moments' in Post-war History," *History Workshop Journal* 61 (2006): 1–24.

in colonies or former colonies in the imperial periphery.[107] Members of this cohort were often for less willing than their parents to acquiesce in official expectations of acculturation and integration that formed the crux of liberal "race relations" discourse in the 1950s and 1960s. While their parents' generation had considered the abject circumstances of black life in postwar Britain to be set to improve, this "second generation" of racialized Britons vociferously opposed the racial abandonment that came with deindustrialization, stagflation, ghettoization, increasing segregation, and militarized policing of communities of color in Britain during the 1970s. Buoyed by anticolonial struggles in Africa and the Caribbean, as well as antiracist radicalisms in the U.S. that refused to concede to mid-1960s civil rights settlements, race-radical opposition movements formed and expanded in British urban centers.

For the radical antiracisms of the time, a politics of minority culture was never simply about celebrating cultural diversity or preserving cultural heritage for its own sake. Even when minority culture was conceived in terms of cultural preservation, the task of practicing cultural traditions from regions in the imperial periphery carried with it the charge of anticolonial struggle and the self-determination of formerly colonized populations. This meant that the practice of cultural preservation was understood to entail processes of transformation, such as psychic decolonization, the creation of non-exploitative ethico-economic orders, and the formation of new collectivities of minoritized Britons. For example, as Brian Alleyne has documented, the black British publishing house New Beacon Books founded in London in 1966 served as a hub for a "wider network of social-movement organizations" that undertook a wide range of cultural and political activities. These included commissioning new fiction and non-

[107] On "racist immigration laws" introduced in Britain during the 1960s, see Anna Marie Smith, *New Right Discourse on Race and Sexuality: Britain, 1968–1990* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

fiction works by writers from across the African and Asian diasporas, publishing new editions of writing that was out of print or hard to find, and hosting book fairs and festivals, as well as community education, legal defense campaigns, and strengthening economic ties between black businesses, tradesmen, and artists: the activism of the "New Beacon circle," Alleyne writes, was "not only built around resistance, but [sought] actively to create alternative systems of value and communication."[108] Thus, as Timothy Brennan has noted, the leaders of movements against racist police brutality and the racially uneven impoverishments of deindustrialization in Britain during the late 1960s and 1970s were artists, literary intellectuals, and publicists.[109]

Considered in macro, perhaps the most significant "alternative system of value and communication" created by British people of color in the late 1960s and 1970s was an oppositional concept of black Britishness that formed a point of identification and solidarity across racialized communities of Britain, including those of African, Asian, and Caribbean descent. Importantly, the construction and circulation of an oppositional black identity depended on openings in the cultural field, as scholars of British postcoloniality such as Kobena Mercer, Paul Gilroy, and Avtar Brah have contended. After all, Mercer emphasizes how this idea of black British identity and solidarity, like blackness itself, "was not always already there, but something that had to be constructed."[110] For this task, Gilroy adds, the "culture and politics of black American and the Caribbean [became] the raw materials for creative processes which redefine what it means to be black, adapting it to distinctively British experiences and meanings."[111]

---

[108] Alleyne, *Radicals against Race*, 2.
[109] Brennan, "Black Theorists and Left Antagonists."
[110] See Brennan, "Black Theorists and Left Antagonists"; Kobena Mercer, "'1968': Periodizing Politics and Identity" [1992], in *Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge, 1994), and Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (New York: Routledge, 1996).
[111] Paul Gilroy, *"There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack": The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* [1987] (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 154.

Rather than erasing the cultural and experiential diversity among British people of color, it created what Stuart Hall has called a "unifying framework based on the building up of identity across ethnic and cultural differences between different communities."[112] These provisional, mercurial, and expansive valences of blackness made it such a powerful label and rallying point for a new generation of British-born people of color: "the naturalized connotations of the term *black*," writes Kobena Mercer, "were disarticulated out of the dominant codes of racial discourse, and rearticulated as signs of alliance and solidarity among dispersed groups of people sharing [a] common historical experience of British racism."[113] In this way, *black* became a powerful signifier for solidarity across British communities of color, a means by which to undermine divisions of labor along ethnic lines, and a tool with which to highlight the arbitrariness of racial categories.[114]

In the context of 1970s Britain, the making-public of such oppositional black identities via writing, protest, and performance issued a devastating challenge to priorities of national solidarity and civic peacefulness that underpinned British "race relations" discourse since the end of the Second World War. This liberal "race relations" regime had placed faith in notions of individual autonomy and national cohesion, stressing the dispersal, assimilation, and integration of nonwhite Britons into a presumptively harmonious national community as the means to dispel racial antagonisms within the nation. By contrast, the oppositional black identities that were formulated and made public in Britain during the late 1960s and 1970s rejected such measures,

---

[112] Stuart Hall, "New Ethnicities" [1987], reprinted in *Black British Cultural Studies: A Reader*, eds. Houston A. Baker, Manthia Diawara, and Ruth H. Lindeborg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 163–172.
[113] Mercer, "'1968': Periodizing Politics and Identity," 287–308; 291.
[114] Dawson, *Mongrel Nation*, 19. As the editors of *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racisms in the 70s* write, "The reproduction of racial and ethnic divisions has been a central feature of accumulation in the post-war period precisely because of the requirement that labour from the colonies and other peripheral economies be used to reorganize the main industrial sectors of the advanced industrial economies" (12–13).

seeing them as divide-and-rule strategies. Radical antiracisms aimed instead to emphasize practices of rebellion, self-determination, and self-identification among Britain's racialized populations.[115]

Perhaps the most emblematic example of black cultural-material activism in 1970s Britain was the Notting Hill carnival. Founded in 1966, the two-day street festival in what was then the ghettoized, largely black-Caribbean neighborhood of London's Notting Hill served as a focal point for the culture work of this period's race-based social movements.[116] From its inception, the carnival featured music, dance, theatre, performance, poetry, and visual arts. While the origins of the event can be traced to Caribbean traditions of large public carnivals, the size and scope of the Notting Hill carnival increased exponentially in the 1970s, as it began to move away from traditional Caribbean models of public celebration. Instead, the carnival emphasized what Kobena Mercer calls a "composite aesthetic" of tradition and innovation, in Mercer's words a "vernacular cosmopolitanism" that translated non-Western traditions in the service of creating new cultural production and political solidarities in the metropolitan context of postcolonial Britain.[117]

During this time, its participants also came to include members of Asian and other ethnicized minority groups in Britain, forming what Abner Cohen has referred to as the carnival's distinctive "working-class poly-ethnic amity."[118] Thus, as Ashley Dawson explained,

---

[115] Timothy Brennan has explained how antiracist activism such as the "visual public celebration of being both British and black" could enact a "discursive violence" upon the racial order of metropolitan Britain. Brennan, "Black Theorists and Left Antagonists," 90.
[116] Cecil Gutzmore, "Carnival, the State and Black Masses in the United Kingdom [1993]," in *Black British Culture and Society: A Text Reader*, ed. Kwesi Owusu (London: Routledge, 2000), 361–376.
[117] Quoted in Dawson, *Mongrel Nation* […].
[118] Abner Cohen, "Drama and Politics in the Development of a London Carnival," in *Black and Ethnic Leaderships in Britain: The Cultural Dimensions of Political Action*, eds. Pnina Werbner and Muhammad Anwar (New York: Routledge, 1991), 170–202.

the Notting Hill carnival "offered dramatically visible evidence of both the large number and the transnational, postcolonial affiliations of British people of color, and it lodged this evidence in public space in the heart of Britain's capital city for all to see."[119] For its participants, the carnival became a key site for the creation and making-public of oppositional black identities. Such public celebrations of blackness performed a discursive violence toward dominant regimes of race in postwar Britain that worked both to divide British a workforce along ethnic lines and to "disperse" and "integrate" people of color into the white population.[120] Yet, as Ester Peeren argues, the carnival's blackness had specific and strategic limits: because the Notting Hill Carnival was "not universal," but rather "worked to exclude the authorities," she writes, it "appeared as a threat to the official order."[121] In this way, the Notting Hill carnival not only was formative of an oppositional blackness, but also installed black opposition within the public space of metropolitan Britain, reclaiming territory at the heart of the British nation-state where it could not be overlooked.[122]

***

First published in 1976, Naseem Khan's *The Arts Britain Ignores* testifies to the role of the Notting Hill carnival in shaping radical black oppositional movements in 1970s Britain. The work was the result of an invitation to Khan from the Arts Council of Great Britain in 1974 to provide policymakers and commentators with the first detailed ethnographic account of the cultural activities of British people of color. To that end, Khan carried out extensive fieldwork across Britain in 1974 and 1975, yet in its final form *The Arts Britain Ignores* went well beyond

[119] Dawson, *Mongrel Nation*, 77–79.
[120] Brennan, "Black Antagonists."
[121] Esther Pereen, "Carnival Politics and the Territories of the Street," in *Constellations of the Transnational: Modernity, Culture, Critique*, eds. Sudeep Dasgupta, and Esther Peeren (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 69–82.
[122] Dawson, *Mongrel Nation*.

the task of social observation. When the book was published in 1976, it not only conveyed extensive information about nonwhite cultural production in Britain, but also articulated itself as a radical antiracist intervention into the mainstream of British public discourse. For example, in the Foreword that begins the study, Khan states clearly her solidarity with the Notting Hill carnival and its participants, and not with a growing demonization of the carnival on the part of liberal and conservative public debate in Britain: the correct response to such resentment of black cultural activism, she writes, "is that we need not fewer carnivals, but more" (ii). Her uncompromising statement of support for the carnival at the start of her study set the stage for Khan's groundbreaking work of ethnography, advocacy, social and political analysis, and demands upon the British state apparatus for a radical rethinking of government cultural policy. Indeed, what has often been misunderstood about *The Arts Britain Ignores* is that it not only provided an unprecedented inventory of nonwhite culture in Britain, but also stands as a significant example or artifact of black British cultural-political activism of the 1970s.

The daughter of Indian immigrants to the U.K., Khan herself is a member of the "second generation" of British people of color who had been born in Britain in the postwar period to parents who had migrated to Britain from the global South.[123] Her strong ties with many of the communities she studied made her apt to take on the task of prioritizing cultural production as the practice of black and minority self-determination. In the late 1960s, Khan had co-founded and edited *The Hustler*, one of Britain's earliest black newspapers. As she recounts, each issue was "put together in my front room in Notting Hill," where work on the paper quickly became a

[123] See Naseem Khan's personal website, <http://www.naseemkhan.com/>, accessed June 20, 2015.

focus for a number of black activists.[124] Khan's involvement with *The Hustler* not only strengthened her familiarity with black oppositional movements in metropolitan Britain, but also illustrated the world-making possibilities of black oppositional culture. During its period of circulation during the late 1960s, *The Hustler* featured reportage of black cultural events and activities of communities of color in London alongside work by black writer-activists from across the African and Asian diasporas.[125] For these writers in Khan's circle, black writing was to an extraordinary degree a political act: it was understood as crucial to the tasks of education, "consciousness raising," debate, and the strengthening of personal and political connections between people of color in Britain and those in the Third World and the U.S., while the circulation of the black-written word among black communities was a way in which to model an alternative ethico-economic order and to confound official and dominant attempts to control the postwar "problem" of race.[126]

For Khan, the project of anthologizing the cultural production of Britain's racialized populations in *The Arts Britain Ignores* constituted a similar political act of black writing. On the one hand, one goal of the study was to highlight the almost total lack of financial and institutional support offered to minority cultures by public funding bodies in Britain such as the Arts Council. On the other hand, another goal was to record and amplify the cultural-material

---

[124] Naseem Khan, "Choices for Black Arts in Britain over Thirty Years," in *Shades of Black: Assembling Black Arts in 1980s Britain*, eds. David A. Bailey, Ian Baucom, and Sonia Boyce (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 115–22; 116.

[125] *Ibid*. These writers included as Amiri Baraka (Leroi Jones), Courtney Tulloch, Darcus Howe, John LaRose, and Edward Kamu Brathwaite. LaRose and Brathwaite, for example, were key figures in New Beacon Books, while Howe was a founding member of the Race Today collective and its advocacy publications, *Race Today* and *Race Today Review*. See Alleyne, *Radicals against Race*.

[126] In an essay from 1974, A. Sivinandan described the political act of black writing in Britain as that which "blacken[s] the language, suffuse[s] it with… darkness, and liberate[s] is from the presence of the oppressor." A. Sivinandan, "The Liberation of the Black Intellectual" [1974], in *Catching History on the Wing: Race, Culture and Globalisation* (London: Pluto Press, 2008), 3–18; 9.

activism of Britain's black communities, cultural production that Khan understood as the "political ammunition of activists."[127] Indeed, Khan sought to underline the continuities between the politics of anthologizing the arts of British ethnic minorities and a global, subaltern politics of minority culture during a period of decolonization. She emphasized, for instance, that *The Arts Britain Ignores* took its cue from postcolonial politics in the Third World, where "one of the first tasks of any [decolonized] country after independence has been to define itself in historical and cultural terms" (90). As such, *The Arts Britain Ignores* constituted irrefutable evidence on a vast scale of black accomplishment in postcolonial Britain, writing into official existence the cultures and life-worlds that the postwar Keynesian state had rendered illegible, sought to normalize, or contained within the "new empire within."

Like the public activism of the Notting Hill carnival, *The Arts Britain Ignores* lodged evidence of the vitality and abundance of minoritized lives within the center of British national debate. For this task, Khan assembled a team of eight research "advisors," most of whom were outsiders to the established channels of public policymaking and the "race relations industry." Like Khan herself, the majority of these advisors, including the British cultural studies scholar Stuart Hall, the artist Ossie Murray, and the theatre director Ravi Jain, were people of color.[128] With their suggestions and ideas in mind, Khan personally undertook extensive research of more than two hundred "grassroots cultural organisations" run by members of racialized communities, which Khan completed in 1974 and 1975. With funding from the Arts Council of Great Britain, the Commission for Racial Equality (a British government body), and the (privately funded)

[127] Naseem Khan, "Taking Root in Britain: The Process of Shaping Heritage," in *The Politics of Heritage: The Legacies of 'Race'*, eds. Jo Littler and Roshi Naidoo (New York: Routledge, 2005), 133–43; 135.
[128] Khan, *The Arts Britain Ignores*, 8–9.

Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Khan could be certain that *The Arts Britain Ignores* would be discussed and taken seriously within the institutions and discourses of British government policymaking.[129]

The result was a truly unprecedented picture of cultural production by people of color and other ethnic minorities in Britain.[130] Framed by substantial sections for introductory and concluding remarks, Khan divided *The Arts Britain Ignores* into chapters organized by different communities of Britain's ethnic minorities. These include those racialized in 1970s Britain as nonwhite, such as "Bangladeshis," "Chinese," "Indians," "Pakistanis," and "West Indians." But they also include white European ethnic groups, such as "Cypriots" and "East and Central Europeans." In the report, Khan defended this on the basis that: "The issue is not only one of colour, but of the way that society accommodates ethnic minority cultural activities at large, from Eastern Europeans to West Indians" (145). Khan's ethnic theory of race also took into account Britain's Jewish population, but not in the form of fieldwork or a dedicated chapter of her study; British Jews, Khan suggested, had assimilated so successfully that their representation in *The Arts Britain Ignores* would be unnecessary (145). Khan's working thesis, in other words, was to study and report on only ethnic minority groups whom she considered were currently facing systemic exclusion and marginalization in Britain.

With its focus on ethnicity, *The Arts Britain Ignores* was able to make a strong case for rethinking British national culture, including prestigious cultural institutions at the center of British public policy, as a series of multiple "minority" cultures (9). As Khan pointed out several

[129] Khan, "Taking Root in Britain," 135.
[130] On *The Arts Britain Ignores* as a watershed text, see Dewdney, Dibosa, and Walsh, *Post Critical Museology*, 50–51.

times in her report, its categories of ethnic minority groups were somewhat arbitrary, contentious, and subject to change over time.[131] Yet, by marshaling extensive evidence of ethnic minority cultures in Britain, Khan's report confronted an environment in which both Britain's two major political parties (Conservative and Labour) largely agreed that viable and effective solutions to racial inequalities and antagonisms in British society lay in reducing the number of ethnic minority "immigrants," rather than in tackling structural and systematic racial exclusions, such as those maintained by government policies.[132] For example, Khan noted in the opening pages of *The Arts Britain Ignores* that academic and journalistic sociology had amassed a "vast literature" on "the so-called problems of immigration" (5), but almost none "based on respect for [the] achievements" of immigrants to Britain and their British-born children (8). In this way, Khan's work extended the kinds of "poly-ethnic amity" created by the Notting Hill carnival and other black cultural activism in 1970s Britain to include ethnic minority groups racialized as white, modeling new and expanded constituencies for antiracist activism and challenging powerfully a postwar consensus that understood Britain as primordially white and Christian nation.[133]

Throughout *The Arts Britain Ignores*, opera played a decisive role in tying Khan's account of minority culture in 1970s Britain to concerns with the material and structural conditions of racialization. If the black British oppositional identities of the time were constructed by "appropriat[ing]" elements of mass-mediated culture, as Kobena Mercer has

---

[131] For example, as Khan writes in the report's Foreword: "For the record, the National Federation of Bangladeshi Associations felt that my view of Bangladeshi culture was too 'Indian-orientated.'… Some Poles felt it was misleading to place their community in a chapter with Ukrainians" (ii).
[132] See Ana Aliverti, *Crimes of Mobility: Criminal Law and the Regulation of Immigration* (London: Routledge, 2013); Kathleen Paul, *Whitewashing Britain: Race and Citizenship in the Postwar Era* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); and Smith, *New Right Discourse on Race and Sexuality*.
[133] See Wendy Webster, *Englishness and Empire 1939–1965* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

argued, *The Arts Britain Ignores* appropriated a national discourse about opera in order to articulate an opposition to cultural policies in Britain that maintained and exacerbated racial exclusions.[134] Khan's opera talk, in other words, provided opportunities to achieve critical leverage on the conditions of racialization in postwar Britain. For example, on its opening page Khan noted how there was little interest in her research on the part of Britain's national media: "The *Sunday Times*," she reported, "dropped a feature [on the preparation of her study] in favour of an apparent scoop about Bayreuth" (i). Here, Khan's comments emphasized how on the eve of its publication in 1976, the first substantive study of nonwhite cultural production in Britain was eclipsed in the pages of one Britain's national newspapers by reportage on a prestigious operatic institution that was at that time a century old: while newspaper commentary on "Bayreuth" would count as national news, an extensive and unprecedented study of nonwhite cultural production in Britain would not. This opening passage in *The Arts Britain Ignores* modeled the kinds of black appropriations of white metropolitan cultural discourse that otherwise worked to marginalize racialized Britons.

In other instances, Khan's appropriations of opera discourse in *The Arts Britain Ignores* challenged more directly the public policies of arts funding in postwar Britain that worked to marginalize British people of color. The *cri de guerre* of Khan's study, one of the most provocative claims made several times in the text states that state-funded opera in Britain should properly be considered a "minority" culture (8–9): "Many cultural activities supported by, say, the Arts Council [of Great Britain]—from opera to experimental music—are minority tastes, effectively inaccessible to large sections of the community" (8–9). Such a proposal made a high

[134] Mercer, "'1968': Periodizing Politics and Identity," 300.

demand upon the British state. It called for redistribution of public resources away from opera and toward people of color. In so doing, it refused to accede to Keynesian conceptions of public policy, which had placed opera at the center of state-funded culture in Britain in the postwar period. Whereas Keynesian policies had generally justified the prestige they afforded opera by asserting that "the fine arts exclusively"—Western traditions of white metropolitan culture—were the repository of the best thinking and therefore the only cultural practices worthy of public subsidy, *The Arts Britain Ignores* imagined British culture as a series of equally valuable minority traditions.[135]

Khan's theory of opera as minority culture was not the culmination of her demands upon British state power and institutions; rather it was a means of articulating an opposition to the normal politics of postwar Keynesian governance. Indeed, challenging the racial exclusions and disenfranchisements of the British welfare state would have been impossible without challenging public policies that defined black life-worlds in Britain as unrecognizable, dangerous, or criminal. Although insurgent mobilizations of nonwhite minority culture have often been misrecognized as multicultural window dressing hiding the business-as-usual of racial capitalism, such actions, in fact, could interrupt the normative social order of postwar Britain, especially when they were shouldered by people of color rather than determined by dominant or state interests. Khan's references to the state apparatus of British opera provided her study with critical leverage on the role of cultural policy in upholding racialized exclusion and disenfranchisement in 1970s Britain. Whereas existing systems of state subsidy granted opera a

[135] On the (Keynesian) category of "the fine arts exclusively" in postwar British cultural policy, see Raymond Williams, "Politics and Policies: The Case of the Arts Council," in *Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists* (London: Verso, 1989), 143.

large proportion of public funding, Khan suggested, opera in fact had a much more limited appeal among the British public. This observation prepared the ground for her to draw attention to the almost total absence of state funding granted to British artists of color. When Khan conducted her fieldwork of ethnic minority culture in Britain in 1974 and 1975, almost no state funding or institutional support was made available to British artists of color or to non-Western cultural forms. As Khan recalls, in the 1970s arts organizations run by members of ethnic minority groups found a "welcome mat by the closed door" when they requested institutional or financial support from public bodies, despite the ways in which the Arts Council had intended to widen the boundaries of what counted as British national culture:

> The arts funding system had been constructed with certain assumptions in mind about the way the arts functioned, who there were for and in what sort of contexts. By and large, the newcomers confounded the system. They tended to cross boundaries between art forms, combining music and dance, for instance, in one event…. [and] blurring lines between cultural, social and religious occasions. This tended to be seen as producing "impure" art by the funders [e.g. the Arts Council].[136]

As Khan was keenly aware, this "blurring" of social and cultural goals was in part a deliberate effort on the part of British people of color during this period to prioritize artistic culture within movements for social transformation, and it was also a result of the almost total lack of public funding available for ethnic minority culture. Since minority communities were effectively disenfranchised from the institutional and financial support of government bodies, minority culture was, in Khan's words, by necessity "overwhelmingly self-funded" and reliant on "community support."[137] This created a catch-22: the criteria for inclusion within the Arts Council's ostensibly expanded repertoire of clients remained largely unattainable for arts

[136] Khan, "Taking Root in Britain," 136–137.
[137] *Ibid*., 136.

organizations not already in receipt of public funding. Such organizations could be designated as "amateur" groups, while the Council's existing clients appeared "professional" by virtue of the fact that they had long been provided with substantial sums of public funds.[138] In this way, an apparently objective distinction between amateur and professional arts organizations could be employed in such a way that maintained racial exclusions that had operated within British cultural policy since its modern-day inception with the founding of the Keynesian welfare state in 1946, even while disregarding the Arts Council's decisive role during the postwar era in establishing and maintaining full-time professional symphony orchestras, opera companies, and other institutions of white metropolitan culture.[139]

In Khan's work, opera became a key reference point for a government policies of arts funding that excluded cultural organizations run by people of color. Drawing on a series of interviews that she conducted with arts administrators and public policymakers, Khan reported in *The Arts Britain Ignores* that such policies were often rationalized on the stated basis that nonwhite arts organizations could not be adequately assessed by any one the Arts Council's "departments" of "Music," "Drama," "Literature," "Visual Arts," and others. Ethnic minority arts, Khan's interlocutors in policymaking and administrative positions told her, were instead in "hybrid" forms that could not be categorized into any one of the Arts Council's funding "departments." Yet, as Khan pointed out, the irony was that the Arts Council had never denied

[138] *Ibid.,* 137.
[139] Raymond Williams (for a brief period in the 1970s a member of the Arts Council of Great Britain) discusses the ways in which the Arts Council of Great Britain has often claimed to inhabit a "virtuous middle ground" despite operating under assumptions and practices characterized by a "radical incoherence." Williams, "Politics and Policies," 141–50.

opera companies funding on the grounds that the performances they mounted were in "hybrid" forms, even though opera likewise encompassed areas such as music, drama, and dance.[140]

In critical maneuvers such as these, Khan's opera talk rendered visible a series of racial exclusions at the heart of British cultural policy, by which opera and its almost entirely white performers, directors and other personnel had been allocated the lion's share of government funding for the arts since the end of the Second World War. This meant that *The Arts Britain Ignores* did not have to advocate simply for an expansion of the Arts Council's list of client organizations. By commandeering a national discourse of British opera, Khan stressed the importance of radically rethinking Keynesian rosters of national culture in such a way that challenged directly the privileges of traditional elites and the prestige of white European culture. Khan's opera talk, in other words, asserted the prerogative of British people of color to claim representation and public resources at the center of national discourse.

One of the key effects of Khan's opera talk was to make the case for solidarity among communities of color in Britain on issues of cultural policy and welfare provision. *The Arts Britain Ignores* situated the institution or apparatus of state-funded opera in Britain as a shared interest for British people of color. On the one hand, it suggested that existing cultural policies in Britain that prioritized opera should be the target of antiracist policies designed to redistribute public funds more democratically. On the other hand, it modeled an appropriation of the wider apparatus of British opera by people of color in such a way that lodged evidence of the abundance and vitality of nonwhite lives within British national discourse. In this way, Khan aimed to show how communities of color in Britain had in common an experience of "neglect"

[140] Khan, "Taking Root in Britain," 137.

by dominant British institutions and the postwar British welfare state (5). Moreover, as *The Arts Britain Ignores* demonstrated, this was a neglect that opera talk—or the discursive apparatus of British opera—could render visible. Khan's work showed, in other words, how a national discourse of British opera could serve as an opportune stage for forms of enunciation that challenged the welfare state's role in creating and maintaining white dominance and nonwhite exclusion.

Like the wider black oppositional movements to which it testified and in which it participated, Khan's work marshaled concepts of minority culture in order to constitute performatively a provisional solidarity among people of color in 1970s Britain. Whereas the Notting Hill carnivals throughout the 1970s were the occasion for large crowds of nonwhite Britons to assemble and reclaim territory in public space, Khan's work bore witness to a substantial presence of people of color in postcolonial Britain by lodging evidence of nonwhite lives and cultural production within British public discourse, including a national discourse of opera. While it delineated nonwhite solidarity using the term *ethnic minorities* rather than the more controversial or confrontational term *black*, Khan's text also reiterated this solidarity at the level of form. With its organization into chapters according to ethnic categories, *The Arts Britain Ignores* modeled the kind of "poly-ethnic amity" performed by the Notting Hill carnival or by new, oppositional definitions of blackness in 1970s Britain more generally. In this way, Khan's work outlined a politics of making-public both the precarity and the abundance of nonwhite lives in postcolonial Britain, challenging postwar liberal prerogatives of nonwhite assimilation and integration.

Yet, *The Arts Britain Ignores* by no means exhausted the possibilities for constructing an oppositional black identity within the discursive, institutional, and cultural apparatus of the

British welfare state. Immediately upon its publication, Khan's study was met by pointed criticism not only from some of its ethnographic subjects, but also from black British voices it seemed not to hear and acknowledge. One of these voices was that of the artist and writer Rasheed Araeen, who issued a stern rebuke to Khan's report in an essay published in 1978 under the truculent title "The Art Britain *Really* Ignores."[141] Araeen alleged that the policy recommendations put forward in *The Arts Britain Ignores*, such as public funding under the category of "ethnic arts," would consign the work of British artists of color to the margins of national culture, rather than allow nonwhite Britons to share center-stage with the cultural production of traditional, white elites. This marginal position, he argued, would relieve black artists of the responsibility for mounting a cultural-materialist politics of social transformation. If a government-funded program of "ethnic arts" allowed black voices unprecedented representation on the British national stage, it also foreclosed possibilities of testifying to, and seriously reckoning with, the "new empire within" modern-day Britain. Indeed, Araeen suggested that government initiatives of "ethnic arts" would not respond to the demands of communities or artists of color, but instead serve only the "white establishment." In particular, Khan's report would serve what he described as a newfound objective on the part of the British state to resolve quickly and contain the "problem" of black opposition and insurgency in 1970s Britain.[142]

Despite these criticisms, Araeen agreed with Khan that nonwhite artists and other cultural producers were vastly underrepresented within Britain's cultural institutions, including the

[141] Rasheed Araeen, "The Art Britain *Really* Ignores [1979]" in *Making Myself Visible* (London: Kala Press, 1984), 100–105. Also see Rasheed Araeen, "Re-Thinking History and Some Other Things," *Third Text* 15, no. 54 (2001): 93–100.
[142] Rasheed Araeen, "The Art Britain *Really* Ignores," 101.

institutions that received public funding from the Arts Council. He made this position clear in his 1976 essay "Preliminary Notes for a Black Manifesto," which included a brief response to Khan's then-newly published report, before his more extended critique of Khan's work in "The Arts Britain *Really* Ignores." In his "Preliminary Notes for a Black Manifesto," first published in the London-based journal *Black Phoenix*, Araeen argued that British artists of color were effectively disbarred from receiving public funding: "The implication [of British cultural policy] is very clear," he maintained; "Black artists are considered neither British nor professional by the Arts Council—and that must go for the whole art establishment."[143]

Indeed, Araeen was more strident in making these claims than Khan, who assessed only the cultural rather than economic "contributions" of ethnic minorities to British society:

> When we speak of the British art establishment, we mean the whole art establishment—art galleries, museums, art magazines and books, art schools, and what have you, official and private. But we are more concerned here with the Arts Council of Great Britain… These bodies are financed by public money which must surely include the tax money from black people in British society. This means BLACK PEOPLE ARE ACTUALLY CONTRIBUTING TOWARDS THE COST OF RUNNING THE OFFICIAL ART BODIES AND THUS TOWARDS THE SUPPORT AND PROMOTION OF ART/CULTURE IN BRITAIN. But what do we get in return? NOTHING, or maybe SOME CRUMBS sometimes.[144]

Thus, in Araeen's analysis, British people of color were not only "ignored" by state and dominant institutions; their labor and very presence in postcolonial Britain, Araeen argued, were systemically concealed in such a way that could made the introduction of funding for "ethnic arts" appear as generous concessions to nonwhite artists rather than a severely limited and selective form of rebalancing the public resources of the welfare state toward more even racial outcomes.

---

[143] Rasheed Araeen, "Preliminary Notes for a Black Manifesto" [1976], *Making Myself Visible*, 73–99; 89.
[144] *Ibid*., 90.

However, while Araaen agreed with Khan's findings in *The Arts Britain Ignores* that British people of color faced immense obstacles to receiving state support for their cultural production, his analysis of racism in 1970s Britain differed from Khan's report at a more fundamental level. In particular, Araeen took issue with what he understood as Khan's politics of multi-ethnic solidarity in her landmark study. Whereas Khan had sought to model a wide coalition of British "ethnic minorities," a coalition that included ethnic minority groups racialized as white, Araeen argued that this approach "confused" or "obscured" an understanding of what he described as the particular conditions of deprivation and violence faced by nonwhite people descended from slaves and indentured laborers in British colonies: "What actually separates us black people from the Poles, Greeks or Ukranians," Araeen argued, "is the difference between our and their relationship with the so-called host population."[145] This "difference," he argued, "result[ed] from colonialism and its present relationship with the West," a relationship that he identified specifically as "neo-colonial."[146] Whereas white European ethnic groups faced discrimination, they did not face stigma, exclusion and violence based on "visible" marks of race or histories of British imperial rule.[147] For Araeen, the "differences" between white and nonwhite ethnic minorities were differences of structural position within his contemporary British society, whereby the postcolonial descendants of colonized, enslaved, and indentured populations are subject to specifically different forms of oppression from that experienced by other groups in Britain. Araeen suggested that one of the limits of Khan's work in *The Arts Britain Ignores* was that it could not address the specificity of the violence, deprivation and

[145] Araeen, "The Art Britain *Really* Ignores," 102.
[146] Araeen, "Preliminary Notes for a Black Manifesto," 73.
[147] *Ibid*, 73.

exclusion faced by nonwhite Britons descended from colonized populations in the imperial periphery.

In this way, Araeen's antiracist politics cleaved more closely than Khan to the oppositional concepts of blackness that were developed and deployed in 1970s Britain by coalitions of British people of color descended from colonized populations in the imperial periphery. In place of Khan's ethnic model of race, Araeen posited transnational solidarity among colonized people of color in the European imperial periphery: people in "in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean," as well as those "who now live in various Western countries and find themselves in a similar position to that of the actual Third World," and "whom we shall collectively call 'blacks' or 'black people.'"[148] These were claims that Araeen reiterated in his more sustained attack on Khan's work in "The Arts Britain *Really* Ignores," where he made clear that he was "using the word 'black' in a broader sense as a metaphor for all colonised and dominated people."[149] Araeen continued: "The very use of the word 'ethnic' [in Khan's *The Arts Britain Ignores*] to define black people… is alarming."[150]

Despite the decidedly polemical tone of his essays from the 1970s, Araeen made several attempts to distinguish his criticism from a personal attack on Naseem Khan:[151]

> It should really make no difference whether this represents Ms Khan's own view or not… The fact remains that what she is presenting here is no more than the paternalistic view of (white) liberalism: even when it is genuinely sympathetic to the predicament of others, it… cannot comprehend its underlying causes. It cannot therefore be an instrument of any

[148] *Ibid*., 73.
[149] Araeen, "The Art Britain *Really* Ignores," 104.
[150] *Ibid*., 100.
[151] Much later, Khan and Araeen would find more common ground, as their contributions to a major conference on black British art held at Duke University in 2001 (and published in *Shades of Black*) suggest. See David A. Bailey, Ian Baucom, and Sonia Bruce, eds., *Shades of Black: Assembling Black Art in 1980s Britain* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).

> real or radical change. It can though indulge in cosmetic exercises and thus create diversions so that it becomes difficult to understand or deal with the real issues.[152]

Araeen argued, in other words, that Khan's coalition of "ethnic minorities" could not take on the specifically postcolonial position of most people of color in Britain. Araeen wanted his readers to understand how policies of "ethnic arts" funding, such as those proposed by Khan, could reassign black Britons to marginal positions in British society and thus work unintentionally to bring about a restructuring of white dominance.

This important difference between Araeen's and Khan's antiracist strategies played out particularly clearly in the ways in which they each conceived of elite cultural institutions. While Khan's *The Arts Britain Ignores* re-imagined British national culture as a series of multiple minority cultures, Araeen emphasized a more radical set of responses to racial exclusion and antagonism in 1970s Britain. Araeen was adamant that prestigious cultural institutions and cultural elites should not simply cede ground to allow other artists, audiences and cultural traditions room at the center of British national culture; rather, he argued that it was the cultural "mainstream which must be changed" altogether.[153] Thus, while Khan challenged the primacy that British cultural policy afforded opera institutions, Araeen chose institutions of visual arts, such as galleries and museums, as his prime example of the British cultural mainstream.[154] More specifically, Araeen's "Black Manifesto" made a case against the wealth and prestige of European cultural institutions, whose "opulence… has been founded on slavery," before suggesting that prestigious cultural institutions in his contemporary 1970s Britain participate in a larger "racist system" in which "black people are considered secondary."[155] He argued that such

[152] Araeen, "The Art Britain *Really* Ignores," 101.
[153] Araeen, "Preliminary Notes for a Black Manifesto," 90.
[154] Araeen, "The Art Britain *Really* Ignores," 105.
[155] Araeen, "Preliminary Notes for a Black Manifesto," 74; 89.

institutions must be made to reflect the fact that "black people in Britain today" are a permanent feature of British society, not a contingent or temporary population that can be "pushed around or persuaded to leave" or that will vanish into a white mainstream.[156]

While Khan's *The Arts Britain Ignores* advocated the rehabilitation of state-funded opera and other prestigious cultural institutions in Britain as "minority interests," Araeen argued that such institutions would need to be radically transformed. A strategy of institutional transformation, he insisted, was the only way to accomplish the "full recognition" of black Britons, "not as charity… but as our right," since even liberal programs of offering British people of color forms of inclusion within existing structures did not change the fact that "official bodies [such as the Arts Council] (and the private ones) still act, consciously or unconsciously, with a colonial attitude toward black people."[157] Britain's cultural and civic institutions, in other words, clung to a lingering "colonialism" that meant that they could not successfully be re-imagined as "minority" or provincial organizations and bodies. Doing so would merely enjoin nonwhite artists and communities "to accept… marginality."[158]

If Araeen criticized what he saw as Khan's capitulation to a white liberal ideology of ethnicity that reproduced the exploitation and marginalization of people of color, he nevertheless shared with Khan the view that demands for inclusion within the British welfare state and within British civic society were demands worth making. Although Araeen envisioned new "Third World movements" of artistic production, he did not abandon a strategy of achieving "recognition" for black artists within "all art and cultural institutions" in Britain.[159] Like Khan,

---

[156] *Ibid*., 90.
[157] *Ibid*., 91; 90.
[158] Araeen, "The Art Britain *Really* Ignores," 105.
[159] Araeen suggested that black art undertaken outside the boundaries of such British institutions—indeed, outside of Britain, in the "Third Word"—would contend imperialism: "The prerequisite for the indigenous developments of

therefore, Araeen sought a resolution of imperial divisions in the structures and institutions of the post-imperial British state, even as he emphasized to a much greater extent than Khan the imperialist character of contemporary Britain. While Khan's *The Arts Britain Ignores* could not take on the "new empire within" modern Britain or the specifically imperialist violence endured by nonwhite Britons descended from colonized populations, Araeen's work in essays such as "The Arts Britain *Really* Ignores" and "Preliminary Notes for a Black Manifesto" diagnosed the profoundly colonialist conditions of contemporary black British life emphatically, only to assert that these conditions could be overcome within existing British institutions and structures. Araeen states, for example, that "We must not forget that the institutional structure of official bodies [in Britain] was considerably developed and nourished at the time when Britain had a colonial Empire."[160] Yet, it is within these "official bodies" that Araeen sought and advocated the inclusion and equal status of the postcolonial black subject. Indeed, the lengthy correspondence between Araeen and policymakers within public organizations such as the Arts Council reproduced in Araeen's *Making Myself Visible* illustrates how he put his theory of black inclusion into practice.[161] In other words, he often seems to take for granted the possibility of black inclusion within the institutions of the British racial state, as well as the possibility that such inclusion could operate independently of renewed forms of black exclusion and a retrenchment of imperialist divisions: Araeen's optimism is at odds with his analysis of racism as "part and parcel" of the contemporary British "system."[162] This optimism is undermined, I argue,

---

contemporary art in the Third World is a *confrontation* with those forces which have, in the first place, caused its underdevelopment and are today actively obstructing its post-colonial regeneration" ("Black Manifesto," 91).

[160] Araeen, "Preliminary Notes for a Black Manifesto," 90.

[161] See Rasheed Araeen, *Making Myself Visible*, 161–71.

[162] Araeen, "Preliminary Notes for a Black Manifesto," 89.

by David Blake's opera *Toussaint, or the Aristocracy of the Skin* (1977), which revisits Haiti in order to question the compatibility of subaltern struggle and European-operatic tradition.

"We're Free. So What?" Afro-Pessimism in David Blake's *Toussaint*

Toussaint, or the Aristocracy of the Skin is a large-scale opera in three acts by the white British composer David Blake based closely on James's *The Black Jacobins* history.[163] With a libretto the British novelist Anthony (Tony) Ward, the opera adopts James's attention to historical detail in charting events of the Haitian Revolution across a time-span of a dozen or so years leading up to the declaration of an independent Haiti. The first performances of the opera in London in 1977 by English National Opera coincided with the rise of black oppositional movements in Britain, yet at a time in Britain when demands for nonwhite representation and national recognition were rising, *Toussaint* attested powerfully to the limits of black inclusion within the institutions and apparatus of the post-imperial state. As it delineates the global dimensions and enduring patterns of anti-black violence, Blake and Ward's *Toussaint* casts serious doubt on the possibility of reorganizing existing institutional, civic or national communities in such a way that would not repeat the patterns of racial exclusion.

Composed between 1974 and 1977, Blake's opera *Toussaint* participated in the postwar rediscovery of *The Black Jacobins* that followed the publication of the new 1963 edition of James's work and coincided with a period of rapid decolonization in the Third World. In an article in *Opera* magazine that coincided with the 1977 premiere, Blake described *Toussaint* not only as a chronicle of "the miraculous emergence from slavery, at the age of fifty, of a black

[163] Blake and Ward, *Toussaint, or The Aristocracy of Skin*.

genius of extraordinary intelligence and with incredible political and military acumen," but also as an avowedly "political opera about… freedom, revolution and personal choice" that aimed to portray "the kicking out of a colonial power" as "an inspiring business."[164] Against the grain of conventional wisdom about European history, Blake continued, *Toussaint* would "prove" that Napoléon Bonaparte was a "racist." The opera thus raises "political, philosophic and economic questions which relate strongly to today's world, dominated as it is by problems of race, decolonisation and economic survival."[165] In commentary that preceded a public broadcast of the opera on BBC radio in 1977, Blake reiterated similar ideas: *Toussaint* was a "political opera" that would encourage its audience to consider new, relevant, and urgent ideas.[166] In addition, Blake made these pedagogic aims particularly clear in the published edition of the opera's libretto, which appeared in print several months in advance of the 1977 premiere. The opening pages of this edition of the libretto points its readers toward key texts of radical anticolonial-antiracist movements of the postwar era by providing a list of "recommended reading" that includes Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* and the autobiography of Malcolm X.[167] If, as Lisa Lowe has argued, "James's text has played an enormous role in the education of several generations of radical intellectuals thinking about the meaning of slavery and freedom," Blake's framing of *Toussaint* as a "political opera" concerning events of world-historical importance foregrounded the elision of colonial black slavery from both the British operatic stage and the historical imagination of British elites and white middle classes in the postwar era.[168]

---

[164], David Blake and Gerald Larner, "Toussaint," *Musical Times* 118, no. 1615 (September 1977): 721–23.
[165] Blake and Larner, "Toussaint."
[166] Cassette tape recording of 1977 BBC radio broadcast.
[167] Blake and Ward, *Toussaint, or The Aristocracy of Skin*.
[168] Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 152–53. At the time of composing *Toussaint*, it is likely that Blake did not know earlier operatic treatments of the events of the Haitian revolution from outside Britain; these include: *Ouanga* (1932) by the black American composer Clarence Cameron

Blake's conception of *Toussaint* as a "political opera" was by no means a departure from the compositional strategies that he had adopted since the time of his earliest acknowledged works. Born in London in 1936, David Blake is often considered part of a "new generation" of British composers whose professional education and career, unlike Britten and Tippett, took place wholly after the end of World War II.[169] Yet, in some ways, Blake's compositional influences and interests reflect a set of concerns rooted in the pre-World War II period of the 1920s and 1930s. While many of his British contemporaries, including Harrison Birtwistle, Peter Maxwell Davies and Alexander Goehr, were closely guided in the 1950s and 1960s by western European and North American modernisms (such as the work of Pierre Boulez, Luigi Nono, and Elliott Carter), Blake's most formative compositional training took place in East Berlin during a year of study in 1960 and 1961 with the Marxist composer Hanns Eisler (1889–1962).[170] Eisler had been one of Bertolt Brecht's most significant artistic collaborators in Weimar Germany, yet after his return to Europe from a period in the 1940s living in Los Angeles, he enjoyed relatively little exposure or prestige west of the Iron Curtain.[171] Thus, Blake's decision to disregard the serialist orthodoxies of the 1960s meant that he cut an unusual, if also marginal figure in the British new music environment of the time. Blake's first acknowledged works date from this period. They include a music theatre piece *It's a Small War* (1961) for high school students, a number of other vocal works, and chamber music, all of which eschew any extensive use of

---

White and librettist John Frederick Matheus; and, *Troubled Island* (1949) by the black American composer William Grant Still with a libretto by Langston Hughues based on the latter's earlier stage play *Emperor of Haiti*. See Michael Largey, "Visions of Vodou in African American Operas about Haiti: *Ouanga* and *Troubled Island*," *Vodou Nation: Haitian Art Music and Cultural Nationalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 147–85.

[169] Paul Conway, "David Blake: From Note-Rows to Musical Numbers," *Tempo* 67, no. 266 (October 2013): 2–17.

[170] Conway, "David Blake."

[171] See Anne C. Shreffler, "'Music Left and Right': A Tale of Two Histories of Progressive Music," in *Red Strains: Music and Communism Outside the Communist Bloc*, ed. Robert Adlington (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academic, 2013), 67–88.

serialist techniques in favor of decidedly Eislerian priorities of uncomplicated text-setting, use of tonal harmony, programmatic structures (such as in *Scenes* [1972] for solo cello, which is based on Hermann Hesse's 1927 novel *Steppenwolf*), and parody of well-known melodies and musical styles, such as themes from Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*.[172] Since the 1960s, Blake's oeuvre has expanded to include further music theatre, instrumental, and vocal works, many of which—such as his most recent stage work, *Icarus* (in preparation, as of June 2015)—use a Brechtian (or Eislerian) preference for discrete musical numbers, contemporary social commentary, and parody, pastiche and humor.[173] Blake has also pioneered English-language scholarly consideration of his former teacher as editor of the collection of essays and translations, *Hanns Eisler: A Miscellany*.[174]

Toussaint was Blake's first full-length, large-scale opera; with the exception of his more recent opera *The Plummer's Gift* (premiered in 1989, also by ENO), Blake's other operas to date are all smaller-scale chamber works. The opera's vast proportions, at least in comparison to many operas in the standard repertory, convey the sense that the work stands as a testament to weighty moral and historical concerns. *Toussaint* is relatively long at around three hours and fifteen minutes of music. Furthermore, the work calls for a large cast of at least seventeen principal solo singers (who must "double" the parts of two, three or even four characters) and two ("white" and "black") choruses, whose members must cover over 40 minor solo roles. In total, there are over 80 characters in the opera. As at least one reviewer remarked in 1977, this is one reason that the work remains practically indecipherable in performance without a lengthy

[172] Conway, "David Blake."
[173] Personal communication with David Blake, June 2015.
[174] David Blake, ed., *Hanns Eisler: A Miscellany* (Luxembourg: Harwood, 1995).

program note to describe the characters, plot, and historical context. In addition, Blake employs an especially large orchestra, augmented by two on-stage instrumental ensembles and pre-recorded sound on tape. In fact, for the 1977 production by ENO in London's Coliseum theatre, it was necessary to remove two rows of seats and extend the orchestra pit into the auditorium, as well as placing some members of the orchestra in audience boxes in the auditorium.[175] In this way, *Toussaint* expresses claims about the historical significance of the Haitian revolution, and it makes such claims, more specifically, about historical events that have often been overlooked in European historiography, especially historiographies of the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution, the European imperialism, and the American Revolution.[176] Likewise, in text placed prominently in the published edition of the libretto, Blake dedicates the work to "the Haitian people, in recognition of their vitality and resilience."

Closely following the narrative structure of James's *The Black Jacobins*, the opera comprises twenty-two scenes that are set in various locations across the transatlantic world of the French imperial economy, including in Saint-Domingue/Haiti in the Caribbean and in the heart of the French metropolitan government in Paris. The opera's scenes span a narrative that begins in the French colonial plantation with stirrings of anticolonial insurrection on "14 and 22 August, 1791" (Act 1, Scene 1), moves through scenes in the National Convention of Paris (Act 1, Scene 7) and scenes of battle with French troops ultimately under the command of Napoleon

[175] The scale *Toussaint* has surely contributed to the work's scant performance history. Five performances were given in 1977, directed by David Pountney and conducted by Mark Elder. The ENO revived this production in 1983 for a further four performances, but in a version for which Blake had been required to cut around 30 minutes of music from the score. Plans by the Copenhagen Opera Festival to mount a new production of *Toussaint* in 2013 were shelved indefinitely. David Blake, personal communication.

[176] As Lisa Lowe writes, "It was not until the twentieth century that the slave revolt establishing the first independent Black nation in the Caribbean actually entered the historiography." Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, 153.

Bonaparte, and ends on "31 December, 1803" in a newly independent Haiti (Act 3, Scene 4) shortly after Toussaint's death.

Act One begins in August 1791 on a slave plantation in French colonial Saint-Domingue, where Toussaint at this time is still a slave. In a similar way to James's *The Black Jacobins*, the opera opens with an explanation of European imperialism as a global economic network, of which colonies in the imperial "periphery" such as Saint-Domingue were a vital part. Thus, whereas *The Black Jacobins* begins with a preface that enumerates the bare economic facts of the French colony of Saint-Domingue (that provided "two-thirds of the overseas trade of France and…the greatest individual market for the European slave-trade," as well as functioning as "an integral part of the economic life of the age"),[177] Blake's *Toussaint* also makes these economic arrangements clear from the opening lines of the opera; spoken, rather than sung by Toussaint, they ponderously catalog the property owned by the plantation owner:

> Horses and mules, large and small, one hundred.
> Bullocks, cows and oxen, large and small, seventy-five.
> Negroes, young and old, three hundred.
> Capital value of all livestock,
> Two hundred thousand *livres* (Act 1, Scene 1).

Black slavery, in other words, is embedded within an economic system of global exchange; its overthrow will likewise have global implications and repercussions. Meanwhile, a black chorus appears on the hinterland surrounding the plantation, wearing clothing looted from another plantation and with shouts of "Burn the plantations. Burn the *blancs*" (i.e. white French colonizers). Toussaint remarks on what he deems to be their counterproductive "anarchy,"

[177] James, *The Black Jacobins* (1963 edn.), ix.

thereby establishing for the audience at the beginning of the opera the key themes of both the urgency and the difficulty of organizing an effective insurrection against French colonial power.

Scenes 4, 5, and 6 of Act One move forward a few months to December 1791, where Toussaint has risen to the status of leader of a black insurgency. At first, Toussaint attempts to arrive at an agreement with the French that would allow the black population of Saint-Domingue self rule. Soon, it becomes clear that a deal with the French will not be possible; war will be Toussaint's only course of action. The act ends some years later in 1796. To fight the French, Toussaint has amassed and trained an army, who enter "in perfect order." Here, Toussaint and his army have the support of the many sectors of the island's white population, including *petits blancs* (French peasants) and *grand blancs* (minor French aristocrats). The white and black choruses sing together in support of Haitian independence from French rule: "Vive la République… We embrace our white brothers. We embrace our black brothers." However, these jubilant cries are accompanied by several less optimistic voices. Dessalines, one of Toussaint's military generals who will later become Emperor of Haiti after Toussaint's death, remarks that this cozying up to the *grand blancs* is "no way to fight a war of *independence*" from white colonial rule. The act ends with a long, lyrical aria for Suzanne, Toussaint's wife, alone on stage. In part an apostrophe to Toussaint, Tony Ward's libretto for Suzanne's aria draws on William Wordsworth's sonnet "To Toussaint L'Ouverture" (first published in 1803) to ask whether "the common wind" will "remember" the insurrection against the French.[178] Dessalines's and Suzanne's remarks throw into relief the optimism of the uprising, especially its heady and hastily assembled show of solidarity between white and black populations of the island.

[178] For a discussion of C.L.R. James's reception of Wordsworth in *The Black Jacobins*, see Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity*, 60–62.

Act Two begins in 1801 in Saint-Domingue, where Toussaint has become the self-proclaimed governor-general of the entire island. In the first scene of the act, a "magnificently lit reception" in Toussaint's palace, Toussaint gives a bombastic speech praising his rule over the island's population. Yet, it soon becomes clear that not everything has changed since the period of French rule. In order to defeat Napoleon's vast army once and for all, Toussaint tells the crowd, it will be necessary to re-impose indentured labor on the plantations. This will create wealth that can be used to buy "arms and ammunition" with which to fight the French. In a series of asides to the audience, Mars Plaisir laments that subjugation is returning and "another slave rebellion" may be necessary to remove Toussaint from power. The action moves to Paris in the next scene, where Napoléon Bonaparte insists that slavery must be restored in the French colonies because production there has sharply declined. Thus, this portrayal of Napoléon as, in Blake's words, a "racist," differs greatly from more standard accounts of the French leader as a hero of populist revolution in France against the French aristocracy.[179]

In subsequent scenes in Act Two, Toussaint's leadership of the black insurrection begins to disintegrate. In Scene 3 (March 1802), Toussaint's nephew and military general Moïse informs Toussaint that he (Toussaint) has lost the support of the people he claims to govern: "The people have fought for their freedom," he contends, "only to be enslaved again." However, fearing that Moïse is seeking only to usurp him as leader, Toussaint has Moïse shot on charges of treason. After the French fleet is sighted out at sea, there is a battle with French troops (Scene 5) involving men, women and children of the island. The act ends as a much-diminished forces of the black army prepare again for battle under desperate orders from Dessalines: "There is no

[179] Blake and Larner, "Toussaint," 722.

food and water. No ammunition left. We fight with our bare bands." The curtain falls as the men and women take up their battle positions at dawn.

The third, final and shortest act of the opera charts Toussaint's fall from power, arrest by the French, and imprisonment and death in a jail cell in France. In Scene 1 (April 1802), Dessalines is convinced to betray Toussaint, before Toussaint is arrested by French soldiers (Scene 2, set in June 1802). Scene 3 (April 1803) moves to Toussaint's jail cell in the Jura mountains in France, where Toussaint is in the company of Mars Plaisir. Mars is dragged out of the cell by the Jailer, and Toussaint dies alone. In the final scene of the opera (December 31, 1803), Dessalines addresses a crowded square in Port-au-Prince: "I declare the independence of the First Black Republic, of which I shall be Emperor! Emperor of Haiti!" Blake's final stage direction in the score indicates that "The curtain should fall abruptly, giving the sense that the action is interrupted and unfinished." (I return to the opera's ending below.)

The influence of Brecht and Eisler is evident throughout the score of *Toussaint*. The character of Mars Plaisir, Toussaint's valet, serves as the opera's narrator. In classic Brechtian fashion, he frequently comments on the action using spoken, direct address to the audience. This sets up the opera's highly fragmented dramaturgy and sound world. Indeed, in addition to Mars Plaisir's commentaries on the action, Blake employs numerous passages of speech, which are often unaccompanied by the orchestra. The portions of the libretto that are sung use almost entirely syllabic (*arioso*) text setting, with rhythms, emphases and melodic contours that closely match those of natural speech. Also indicative of Blake's emphasis on making the text of the libretto audible in the performance is his decision not to include any vocal ensembles in the

opera.[180] The frequent choruses are also composed of syllabic text setting in rhythmic unison. Moreover, the opera makes much use of a Brechtian preference for musical numbers over through-composed music. While Blake's music for much of the opera crafts a modernist, post-tonal, chromatic language (marked by dissonance, rhetorical gestures and, in the orchestra, unusual sonorities formed by extremes of instrumental register), there are also several Brechtian-style songs that parody certain musical styles by employing tonal melodies and harmonies that jar distinctly with the surrounding musical sound world.

In a scene set in the Paris National Convention in early 1793 (Act 1, Scene 7), Millet, a colonial delegate, makes a speech in support of the French imperial slave system that Blake casts as a slow, minor-mode sarabande, a genteel, baroque dance form in triple meter ("Tempo quasi sarabande"). Here, Millet's description of slaves as enjoying a "pleasant and easy life" under French imperial rule contrasts profoundly with the portrayal of black slavery in earlier scenes of the opera, such as Toussaint's pedestrian enumeration of "three hundred Negroes" as "livestock" or fungible commodity.[181] Thus, the sarabande foregrounds the ways in which the material conditions of culture and learning in the European metropole depended upon racial violence in the imperial periphery.[182] As it comments on the European art music tradition's concerted attempts to isolate itself from blackness, the scene indicts the French imperial economic system for its constitutive slave labor and habitual disavowal of the same. Blake's use of irony here is

[180] The only exception is a brief duet for Toussaint and his wife Suzanne, which itself underscores Suzanne's line in the duet: "There is no need for words between us."
[181] On blackness and fungibility, see Stephen H. Marshall, "The Political Life of Fungibility," *Theory & Event* 15, no. 3 (2012).
[182] Millet's "sarabande" is all the more ironic in light of the purported origins of the sarabande form in colonial descriptions of indigenous music and dance in the New World from the late sixteenth century. See Robert Stevenson, "The First Dated Mention of the Sarabande," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 5, no. 1 (Spring 1952): 29–31.

similar to Brecht's conception of operatic representation more generally as "irrational, "unreal" and "unclear," or what he called the "senselessness of operatic form."[183] While Millet's sarabande constructs an "unreal" picture of slave life in the European colony, its status in the opera as a fragment of an incongruous musical idiom calls attention to the distorted nature of Millet's description. In this way, the scene articulates a skepticism about the capacity of eighteenth-century European art music to incorporate blackness other than under conditions of imperialist subjection.

The final scene of *Toussaint* (Act 3, Scene 4) extends this skepticism about Millet's short sarabande to the entire opera; the opera's ending remains profoundly pessimistic not only about the "success" (in James's words) of the Haitian revolution, but also about the capacity of operatic form to adequately "recogni[ze]" the "vitality and resilience" (in the words of Blake's dedication of the work) of the black population of Haiti. The pessimism of the opera's final scene is prepared by a number of earlier episodes in the work. For example, we have seen at the start of Act 2 how the French authorities under Napoleon planned to thwart Toussaint's rebellion and reintroduce slavery to the island, even while claiming to negotiate with Toussaint in good faith. In addition, Mars Plaisir's (Brechtian) asides have already cast significant doubt on the "resilience" of the Haitian people. In Act 2 (Scene 4), he steps out of the opera's historical narrative to offer a reading of the Haitian revolution from the contemporary era of postwar decolonization. He informs the audience that the Haitian people have not kept the independence won in the revolution, no doubt a reference to events such as the U.S. occupation of Haiti in the

[183] Bertolt Brecht, "Notes on the Opera *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*," in Bertold Brecht, Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic, ed. Marc Silberman, Steve Giles, and Tom Kuhn, 3rd ed. (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 61–70.

early twentieth century and the entrenched impoverishment of the Haitian economy in the period since then.[184] Mars's commentary, in other words, identifies the "afterlife of slavery," even under conditions of formal independence from colonial rule and systems of indentureship.[185]

The final, short section of the opera contrasts markedly with Dessalines's heady declaration of Haitian independence only moments before. In these closing measures of the work, Dessalines's jubilation is suddenly replaced by a slow, labored, and ambiguously pensive chorus that contrasts with Dessalines's triumphalism to ask: "What voice speaks from the fire? What is the storm that is gathering?… What will be the end of the fire?" As a series of piercing chords in the orchestra threaten to drown out the chorus, at this point in the score Blake introduces an audio recording (marked "Tape" in the score) of Haitian bamboo trumpets (or *vaccines*), traditionally a part of Haiti Rara festival music.[186] Intended to be played into the auditorium of the opera house, the audio recording seems to competes with the orchestra, before the opera finishes with a loud orchestral chord of C major in second inversion. Blake has described this chord as a musical "question mark" that ends the entire work.[187] The chord implies a tonal context, in which a triad in second inversion (i.e. with the fifth in the bass) is treated as a dissonance and "requires" harmonic resolution. Indeed, a full orchestral chord of a major or minor triad in second inversion followed by a brief break (silence) is commonly used in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century music to prepare a vocal or instrumental cadenza, a section in

[184] A useful summary of twentieth-century Haitian history is given in Largey, *Vodou Nation*, 1–22.
[185] On the "afterlife of slavery," see Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).
[186] Blake had first learned of these instruments and their use in Haitian Rara music from Harold Courlander, *The Drum and the Hoe: Life and Lore of the Haitian People* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960). Courlander's work is listed among the "recommended reading" in the published libretto of *Toussaint*. Blake then witnessed Rara performance during his trip to Haiti in 1974. Blake, personal communication. Also see Elizabeth A. McAlister, *Rara!: Vodou, Power, and Performance in Haiti and Its Diaspora* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).
[187] Personal interview with the author, May 13, 2015.

free time for a soloist or soloists which may be improvised. In other words, the final chord of Blake's opera suggests a continuation of the music, a continuation that in the case of a solo cadenza remains potentially unplanned or open to improvisation; rather than implying a conclusion, the end of the opera in fact seems to usher in periods of uncertainty and a resumption of the narrative.

Toussaint begins by promising to redress the elision of black Atlantic history from British national culture, but ends by questioning whether such a resolution of antiblack violence is possible within the institutional apparatus of the British state. Here, the operatic form seems unable to accommodate the challenge of an independent black republic of Haiti; following Dessalines's declaration of independence, resolution or conclusion of the opera remains impossible, while the sonic competition between the orchestral texture and the audio recording of the Haitian *vaccines* in the final measures of the opera tears apart at the conventional operatic apparatus of orchestra, singers, and stage business in such a way that foregrounds, rather than narrows, an enduring distance between the institutional apparatus of opera and the black postcolonial subject. In this way, the opera tells the story of "the only successful slave revolt in history" as a story of historical events that marked not the culmination but the perseverance of black slavery, as well as a continued antagonism or discord between the black subject and the apparatus of the post-imperial state staged in the opera by the simultaneous juxtaposition of live orchestral and recorded Haitian musics. Thus, in contrast to calls for black inclusion within the structures and mechanisms of the postwar British state, the opera proposes a disposition of

pessimism regarding the possibility of resolving the postcolonial black subject's exile from metropolitan modernity.[188]

[188] On "Afro-pessimism," see Frank B. Wilderson, *Red, White and Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008); Jared Sexton, "The Social Life of Social Death: On Afro-Pessimism and Black Optimism," *Tensions* 5 (Fall/Winter 2001), and "People-of-Color-Blindness: Notes on the Afterlife of Slavery," *Social Text* 28, no. 2 (2010): 31–56.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary and Archival Sources Consulted

The archives of the Arts Council of Great Britain (AACGB) in the National Archives, London, United Kingdom.

The Library and Archive of the Britten–Pears Foundation, Aldeburgh, United Kingdom.

The online archives of the Library Company of Philadelphia.

Non-official cassette-tape recording of the BBC Radio broadcast of David Blake's opera *Toussaint* (broadcast on October 4, 1977), held by the Chambers Library at the University of Central Oklahoma.

Personal interview with Jonathan Butcher via Skype, March 4, 2016.

Personal interview with David Blake via telephone, May 13, 2015.

Other Sources

Abbas, Tahir. *Islamic Radicalism and Multicultural Politics: The British Experience*. London: Routledge, 2011.

Abbate, Carolyn. *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991.

Abernethy, Graeme. "'Not Just an American Problem': Malcolm X in Britain." *Atlantic Studies*, vol. 7, no. 3, Special Issue: Global Currents (2010):285–307.

Abravanel, Genevieve. *Americanizing Britain: The Rise of Modernism in the Age of the Entertainment Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Adams, Byron. "Elgar's Later Oratorios: Roman Catholicism, Decadence and the Wagnerian Dialectic of Shame and Grace." In *The Cambridge Companion to Elgar*, edited by Daniel M. Grimley and Julian Rushton, 81–105. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Addlington, Robert. "Music Theatre since the 1960s." In *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Opera*, 225–43.

Ahmed, Sara. *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality*. London: Routledge, 2000.

——. "'You End Up Doing the Document Rather than Doing the Doing': Diversity, Race Equality and the Politics of Documentation." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 30, no. 4 (2007):590–609.

Alexander, Claire. "Stuart Hall and 'Race'." *Cultural Studies,* vol. 23, no. 4 (2009):457–82.

Alexander, Ziggi. "Let It Lie Upon the Table: The Status of Black Women's Biography in the UK." *Gender & History*, vol. 2, no. 2 (March 1990):22–33.

Alibhai-Brown, Yasmin. *Imagining the New Britain*. London: Taylor and Francis, 2000.

Aliverti, Ana. *Crimes of Mobility: Criminal Law and the Regulation of Immigration*. London: Routledge, 2013.

Allen, Jafari S. "Black/Queer/Diaspora at the Current Conjuncture." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, vol. 18, nos. 2–3 (2012):211–48.

Alleyne, Brian W. *Radicals against Race: Black Activism and Cultural Politics*. New York: Berg, 2002.

——. "Anti-Racist Cultural Politics in New-Imperial Britain." In *Utopian Pedagogy: Radical Experiments against Neoliberal Globalization*, edited by Richard J.F. Day, Greig De Peuter and Mark Coté. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007.

Ambar, Saladin. *Malcolm X at Oxford Union: Racial Politics in a Global Era*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Anderson, Paul Allen. *Deep River: Music and Memory in Harlem Renaissance Thought*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001.

André, Naomi. "Teaching Opera in Prison." In *The Intersectional Approach: Transforming the Academy through Race, Class, and Gender*, edited by Michele Tracy Berger and Kathleen Guidroz, 258–266. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

André, Naomi, Karen M. Bryan, and Eric Saylor. Introduction to *Blackness in Opera*, 1–10. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012.

Angelo, Anne-Marie. "The Black Panthers in London, 1967–1972: A Diasporic Struggle Navigates the Black Atlantic." *Radical History Review*, no. 103 (Winter 2009):17–35.

Antcliffe, Herbert. "Some Notes on Coleridge-Taylor." *Musical Quarterly*, vol. 8, no. 2 (April 1922):180–92.

Araeen, Rasheed. "From Primitivism to Ethnic Arts." *Third Text*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1987):6–25.

——. *Making Myself Visible: Rasheed Araeen*. London: Kala Press, 1984.

——. "Come On, Cheer Up!" [1982]. In *Storms of the Heart: An Anthology of Black Arts and Culture*, edited by Kwesi Owusu, 119–29. London: Camden Press, 1988.

——. "Re-Thinking History and Some Other Things." *Third Text*, vol. 15, no. 54 (2001):93–100.

Araujo, Ana Lucia, ed. *Politics of Memory: Making Slavery Visible in the Public Space*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Ardoin, John. "Tippett in America." *Opera Quarterly*, vol. 4, no. 4 (1986):1–20.

Arts Council of Great Britain. *The Glory of the Garden: The Development of the Arts in England, a Strategy for a Decade*. London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1984.

Askonas-Shepherd, Lies, et al. "The Future of Opera." *Daedalus*, vol. 115, no. 4 (Fall 1986):1–92.

Austen, Ian. "Never-Heard Opera Makes Money Back." *Croydon Advertiser*, February 24, 2012.

Backhouse, Roger E., and Bradley W. Bateman. "A Cunning Purchase: The Life and Works of Maynard Keynes." In *The Cambridge Introduction to Keynes*, edited by Roger E. Backhouse and Bradley W. Bateman, 1–18. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Bailey, David A., Ian Baucom, and Sonia Bruce, eds., *Shades of Black: Assembling Black Art in 1980s Britain*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005.

Bailkin, Jordanna. *The Afterlife of Empire*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012.

Bairsto, R., and S. Gelbier, "Commemorative Plaques." *British Dental Journal*, vol. 215, no. 5 (September 14, 2013):251–58.

Baldelli Boni, Giovanni Battista. *Il Milione di Marco Polo*. Firenze: Pagani, 1827.

Baldwin, James. *Notes on a Native Son*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1955.

Ball, John C. *Postcolonial Fiction and the Transnational Metropolis*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2004.

Banks, Paul. *The Making of Peter Grimes: Essays and Studies*. Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2000.

Banting, Keith, and Will Kymlicka. "Multiculturalism and the Welfare State: Setting the Context." In *Multiculturalism and the Welfare State*, edited by Keith Banting and Will Kymlikca, 1–48. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Baraka, Amiri. *Blues People: Negro Music in White America*. New York: HarperCollins, 1963.

Bartoli, Adolfo. *I viaggi di Marco Polo*. Firenze: F. Le Monnier, 1863.

Baucom, Ian. "Frantz Fanon's Radio: Solidarity, Diaspora, and the Tactics of Listening." *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 42, no. 1 (Spring 2001):15–49.

Beck, Anthony. "The Impact of Thatcherism on the Arts Council." *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol. 42, no. 3 (1989):362–79.

Beckles Willson, Rachel. *Orientalism and Musical Mission: Palestine and the West.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Bellman, Jonathan D. "Musical Voyages and Their Baggage: Orientalism in Music and Critical Musicology." *Musical Quarterly,* vol. 94 (2011):417–38.

Bennett, Oliver. "Cultural Policy in the United Kingdom: Collapsing Rationales and the End of a Tradition." *European Journal of Cultural Policy*, vol. 1, no. 2 (1995):199–216.

Benton, Gregor, and Edmund Terence Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800–Present: Economy, Transnationalism, Identity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Benyon, John, and John Solomos. "The Simmering Cities: Urban Unrest during the Thatcher Years." *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol. 41, no. 3 (1988):402–22.

Berlant, Lauren. *The Queen of American Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997.

Berman, Russell A. "Du Bois and Wagner: Race, Nation, and Culture between the United States and Germany." *German Quarterly*, vol. 70, no. 2 (Spring 1997):123–35.

Berwick Sayers, W.C. *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor – Musician: His Life and Letters*, 2nd ed. London: Augener, 1927.

Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture* [1994], 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2005.

——, "Narrating the Nation." In *Nation and Narration*, edited by Homi Bhabha, 1-7. London: Routledge, 1990.

Bhattacharyya, Gargi. “Racial Neoliberal Britain?.” In *The State of Race*, edited by Nisha Kapoor, Virinder S. Kalra, and James Rhodes, 31–48. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Birmingham, Kevin. “‘History’s Ass Pocket’: The Sources of Baldwinian Diaspora.” In *James Baldwin: American and Beyond*, edited by Cora Kaplan and Bill Schwarz, 141–58. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011.

Blake, Andrew. *The Land Without Music: Music, Culture and Society in Twentieth-century Britain*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1997.

Blake, David, ed., *Hanns Eisler: A Miscellany*. Luxembourg: Harwood, 1995.

Blake, David, and Anthony Ward. *Toussaint, or The Aristocracy of the Skin – Opera in 3 Acts and 22 Scenes*, libretto. Borough Green, UK: Novello, 1977.

Blake, David, and Gerald Larner. “Toussaint.” *Musical Times*, vol. 118, no. 1615 (September 1977):721–23.

Blissett, William. “Ernest Newman and English Wagnerism.” *Music & Letters*, vol. 40, no. 4 (October 1959):311–23.

Bohlman, Philip V. “Musicology as Political Act.” *Journal of Musicology,* vol. 11, no. 4 (Autumn 1993):411–36.

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and Racial Inequality in Contemporary America*, 3rd ed. Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010.

Booth, Robert. “Want to Become a British Citizen? Better Swot Up on Monty Python,” *The Guardian*, January 27, 2013. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2013/jan/27/british-citizenship-test>.

——. “Judith Weir to Be Appointed First Female Master of Queen’s Music.” *The Guardian*, accessed June 30, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/music/2014/jun/29/judith-weir-female-master-queens-music>.

Bourne, Jenny. “‘May We Bring Harmony’? Thatcher’s Legacy on ‘Race’.” *Race and Class*, vol. 55, no. 1 (July–September 2013):87–91.

Bowen, Meirion. “A Tempest of Our Time.” In *The Operas of Michael Tippett*, edited by Nicholas John, 93–98. New York: Riverrun Press, 1985.

——. *Michael Tippett*. 2nd edition. London: Robson Books, 1997.

Brah, Avtar. *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*. New York: Routledge, 1996.

Brand, Neil. "Judith Weir [interview]." In *Dramatic Notes, Foregrounding Music in the Dramatic Experience*, edited by Neil Brand, 40–41. Luton, UK: University of Luton Press, 1998.

Brecht, Bertolt. "Notes on the Opera *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*." In Bertold Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, edited by Marc Silberman, Steve Giles, and Tom Kuhn, 3rd ed., 61–70. London: Bloomsbury, 2013.

Brennan, Timothy. "Black Theorists and Left Antagonists." *Minnesota Review*, vol. 37 (Fall 1991):89–113.

Brett, Philip. "Britten and Grimes." *Musical Times,* vol. 118, no. 1618 (December 1977):995–1000.

Brewster, Yvonne. "Talawa Theatre Company 1985–2002." In *Staging New Britain: Aspects of Black and South Asian Theatre Practice*, edited by Geoffrey V. Davis and Anne Fuchs, 87–106. Brussels, Belgium: Peter Lang, 2006.

Briggs, Daniel, ed. *The English Riots of 2011: Summer of Discontent*. London: Waterside Press, 2012.

Brighton, Andrew. "Consumed by the Political: The Ruination of the Arts Council." *Critical Quarterly*, vol. 48, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 1–13.

Britten, Benjamin. *Letters from a Life: Selected Diaries and Letters of Benjamin Britten*, edited by Donald Mitchell and Philip Read, 1268, vol. 2: 1939–1945. London: Faber and Faber, 1991.

Brooke, Stephen. "Living in 'New Times': Historicizing 1980s Britain." *History Compass*, vol. 12, no. 1 (January 2014):20–32.

Brooks, Thom. "The British Citizenship Test: The Case for Reform." *Political Quarterly*, vol. 83 (2013):560–66.

Brown, Wendy. *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Browne, Simone. *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015.

Bryan, Beverly, Stella Dadzie, and Suzanne Scafe, *The Heart of Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain*. London: Virago, 1985.

Bullivant, Joanna. "Tippett and Politics: The 1930s and Beyond." In *The Cambridge Companion to Michael Tippett*, edited by Kenneth Gloag and Nicholas Jones, 68–85; 79. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Bunce, R.E.R., and Paul Field. "Obi B. Egbuna, C.L.R. James and the Birth of Black Power in Britain: Black Radicalism in Britain 1967–72." *Twentieth Century British History*, vol. 22, no. 3 (2011):1–24.

Bürger, Peter. *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, translated by Michael Shaw. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

Burrage, Hilary. "Memories of Hiawatha in the Royal Albert Hall." Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Foundation blog, https://sctf.org.uk/2012/05/25/memories-of-hiawatha-in-the-royal-albert-hall/.

——. "Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875–1912), Britain's Foremost Black Classical Composer: The Centenary Legacy." *Huffington Post*, August 29, 2012. http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/hilary-burrage/samuel-coleridgetaylor-18_b_1834759.html.

Burton, Antoinette. *Empire in Question: Reading, Writing, and Teaching British Imperialism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011.

——. *The Trouble with Empire: Challenges to Modern British Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Butcher, Jonathan. "Meeting *Thelma*." *Opera*, vol. 63, no. 2 (2012):142–46.

Byran, Beverly, Stella Dadzie, and Suzanne Scafe. *The Heart of the Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain*. London: Virago, 1985.

Caldwell, John. *The Oxford History of English Music*, vol. 2. Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 1999.

Calico, Joy. *Brecht at the Opera.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008.

Carby, Hazel. "White Woman Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood." In *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain*, edited by the Centre for Contemporary Culture Studies, 212–35. London: Hutchinson and Co., 1982.

Carr, Catherine. "The Music of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875–1912): A Critical and Analytical Study" (Ph.D. dissertation: University of Durham, 2005).

——. “I want to be nothing in the world except what I am – a musician”: Discovering ‘Thelma’, Coleridge-Taylor’s Only Opera.” *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Foundation*, https://sctf.org.uk/2011/07/04/i-want-to-be-nothing-in-the-world-except-what-i-am-a-musician/.

Carrington, Ben. “Improbable Grounds: The Emergence of the Black British Intellectual.” *South Atlantic Quarterly,* vol. 109, no. 2 (2010):369–89.

Carson, Marvin. *Performance: A Critical Introduction*. London: Routledge, 1997.

Chambers, Eddie. *Things Done Change: The Cultural Politics of Recent Black Artists in Britain*. Amsterdam: Ropoi, 2012.

——. *Black Artists in British Art: A History since the 1950s*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2014.

——. “The Only Thing to Look Forward to...Is the Past.” *Cross / Cultures* 144 (2012):1–50.

Chatterjee, Partha. *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*, 2nd ed. London: Zed Books, 1993.

Chivallon, Christine. “Bristol and the Eruption of Memory: Making the Slave-Trading Past Visible.” *Social & Cultural Geography*, vol. 2, no. 3 (2001):347–63.

Chowrimootoo, Christopher. “Bourgeois Opera: *Death in Venice* and the Aesthetics of Sublimation.” *Cambridge Opera Journal,* vol. 22, no. 2 (July 2010):175–216.

Church, Michael. “You Should Be in Opera: Trinidad’s Jill Gomez.” *Caribbean Beat*, issue 7 (September–October 1993).

Clarke, David. *The Music and Thought of Michael Tippett: Modern Times and Metaphysic*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Clayton, Dewey M. “A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Voting Precinct: A Brief History of Disenfranchisement in America.” *Black Scholar: Journal of Black Studies and Research*, vol. 34, no. 3 (2004):42–52.

Clayton, Martin, and Bennett Zon, eds. *Music and Orientalism in the British Empire, 1780s-1940s: Portrayal of the East.* Burlingon, VT: Ashgate, 2007.

Clements, Andrew. “A Chinese Night to Savour.” *Financial Times* (July 11, 1987):17.

Cohen, Abner. “Drama and Politics in the Development of a London Carnival.” In *Black and Ethnic Leaderships in Britain: The Cultural Dimensions of Political Action*, edited by Pnina Werbner and Muhammad Anwar, 170–202. New York: Routledge, 1991.

Coleridge-Taylor, Samuel. *Thelma, or, The Amulet: A Grand Opera in 3 Acts*, Op. 72. Edited by Patrick Meadows. Mallorca: Soundpost Publishing, 2007.

——. *Twenty-Four Negro Melodies*. Boston, MA: Oliver Ditson, 1905.

Coleridge-Taylor, Samuel, and Paul Laurence Dunbar. *Dream Lovers: An Operatic Romance*. London and New York: Boosey, 1898.

Colton, Lisa. "The Female Exotic: Tradition, Innovation and Authenticity in the Reception of Music by Judith Weir." *Contemporary Music Review*, vol. 29, no. 3 (June 2010):277–89.

Conlon, Deirdre, and Nick Gill, "Gagging Orders: Asylum Seekers and Paradoxes of Freedom and Protest in Liberal Society." *Citizenship Studies*, vol. 17, no. 2 (2013):241–59.

Conway, Paul. "David Blake: From Note-Rows to Musical Numbers." *Tempo*, vol. 67, no. 266 (October 2013):2–17.

Courlander, Harold. *Haiti Singing*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1939.

Cowan, Jane K., Marie-Bénédicte Dembour, and Richard A. Wilson, Introduction to *Culture and Rights: Anthropological Perspectives*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Cowgill, Rachel, and Julian Rushton, eds. *Europe, Empire, and Spectacle in Nineteenth-century British Music*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006.

Creighton, Sean. "Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Remembered: Croydon Celebrates Its Greatest Composer." *Croydon Citizen*, December 10, 2012. http://thecroydoncitizen.com/history/samuel-coleridge-taylor-remembered/.

Cross, Jonathan. *The Stravinsky Legacy*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Croyden, Margaret. "Peter Brook's *Tempest*." *The Drama Review: TDR*, vol. 13, no. 3 (Spring 1969):125–28.

Crump, James I. "The Elements of Yüan Opera." *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 17, no. 3 (May 1958):417–34.

Curran, James, Julian Petley, and Ivor Gaber, eds. *Culture Wars: The Media and the British Left*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005.

Dadié, Bernard. *Un Nègre à Paris*. Dakar, Senegal: Présence Africaine, 1959.

Dauer, Alfons. "Towards a Typology of the Vocal Blues Idiom." *Jazzforschung/Jazz Research*, vol. 11 (1979):9–92.

Davis, Angela Y. *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1999.

Davis, H. Louise. "Commodity Substitution: The Charity Music Video as Effective Fundraising Tool." *Journal of Popular Culture*, vol. 48, no. 6 (December 2015):1211–31.

Davis, Madeleine. "The Origins of the British New Left." In *1968 in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1956–1977*, edited by Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth, 45–56. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Dawson, Ashley. *Mongrel Nation: Diasporic Culture and the Making of Postcolonial Britain*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007.

——. "'Love Music, Hate Racism': The Cultural Politics of the Rock Against Racism Campaigns, 1976–1981." *Postmodern Culture*, vol. 16, no. 1 (September 2005).

Dean, Winton. "Music in London" [review of *The Knot Garden*, Royal Opera House, December 1970], *The Musical Times*, vol. 112, no. 1535 (January 1971):47–49.

De Genova, Nicholas. "The Production of Culprits: From Deportability to Detainability in the Aftermath of 'Homeland Security'." *Citizenship Studies*, vol. 11, no. 5 (2007):412–48.

Dennison, Peter. "Elgar and Wagner." *Music & Letters* 66, no. 2 (April 1985):93–109.

Dewdney, Andrew, David Dibosa, and Victoria Walsh. *Post Critical Museology: Theory and Practice in the Art Museum*. London: Routledge, 2013.

Diawara, Manthia. "Power and Territory: The Emergence of Black British Film Collectives." In *Fires Were Started: British Cinema and Thatcherism*, edited by Lester Friedman, 147–160. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

Dibble, Jeremy. "Elgar and His British Contemporaries." In *The Cambridge Companion to Edward Elgar*, edited by Daniel Grimley and Julian Rushton, 15–23. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Dimendberg, Edward. "The Kinetic Icon: Reyner Banham on Los Angeles as Mobile Metropolis." *Urban History*, vol. 33, no. 1 (May 2006):106–25.

Dollimore, Jonathan. *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Dollimore, Jonathan. "The Challenge of Sexuality." In *Society and Literature, 1945–1970*, edited by Alan Sinfield, 51–86. New York: Holmes and Meier, 1983.

Downie, Gordon. "Aesthetic Necrophilia: Reification, New Music, and the Commodification of Affectivity." *Perspectives of New Music*, vol. 42, no. 2 (Summer 2004):264–75.

Dresser, Madge. "Remembering Slavery and Abolition in Bristol." *Slavery & Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies*, vol. 30, no. 2 (2009):223–46.

Dreyer, Martin. "Judith Weir, Composer: A Talent to Amuse." *The Musical Times*, vol. 122, no. 1663 (September 1981):593–96.

Du, Wenwei. "Historicity and Contemporaneity: Adaptations of Yuan Plays in the 1990s." *Asian Theatre Journal*, vol. 18, no. 2 (Fall 2001):222–37.

Du Bois, W.E.B. "The Immortal Child." In *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil* (1920). http://www.gutenberg.org/files/15210/15210-h/15210-h.htm.

——. *The World and Africa: An Inquiry Into the Part which Africa Has Played in World History*. New York: Viking Press, 1947.

——. "Opera and the Negro Problem." *Pittsburgh Courier*, October 31, 1939, reprinted in *Newspaper Columns*, edited by Herbert Aptheker, 2 vols. White Plains, NY: Kraus-Thomson, 1986, vol. 1, 129–31.

DuCille, Ann. *The Coupling Convention: Sex, Text, and Tradition in Black Women's Fiction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Dunbar, Paul Laurence. *In His Own Voice: The Dramatic and Other Uncollected Works of Paul Laurence Dunbar*. Edited by Herbert Woodward Martin and Ronald Primeau. Athens: University of Ohio Press, 2002.

Dworkin, Dennis. *Cultural Marxism in Postwar Britain: History, the New Left, and the Origins of Cultural Studies*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997.

Egbuna, Obi B. *Destroy This Temple: The Voice of Black Power in England*. London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1971.

Eidsheim, Nina Sun. "Marian Anderson and 'Sonic Blackness' in American Opera." *American Quarterly*, vol. 63, no. 3 (Sept., 2011):641–71

Eldridge, Michael. "The Rise and Fall of Black Britain." *Transition,* vol. 74 (1997):32–43.

Ellis, Nadia. "Black Migrants, White Queers and the Archive of Inclusion in Postwar London." *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, vol. 17, no. 6 (2015):893–915.

El-Tayeb, Fatima. *European Others: Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

English, Jim. "Empire Day in Britain, 1904–1958." *Historical Journal*, vol. 49, no. 1 (March 2006):247–76.

Esty, Jed. *A Shrinking Island: Modernism and National Culture in England*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004.

Everett, William A. "*Chu Chin Chow* and Orientalist Musical Theatre in Britain during the First World War." In *Music and Orientalism in the British Empire, 1780s–1940s*, edited by Martin Clayton and Bennett Zon, 277–96. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007.

Fanon, Frantz. *A Dying Colonialism* [1959]. New York: Grove Press, 1965.

——. *Black Skin, White Masks* [1952], translated by Richard Philcox, 7. New York: Grove Press, 2008.

Farred, Grant. Introduction to *Rethinking C.L.R. James*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1995.

Federico, Annette R. *Idol of Suburbia: Marie Corelli and Late-Victorian Literary Culture*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000.

Feldman, David. "Why the English Like Turbans: Multicultural Politics in British History." In *Structures and Transformations in Modern British History*, edited by David Feldman and Jon Lawrence, 281–302. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Ferguson, Roderick A. *The Reorder of Things: The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012.

Fick, Carolyn E. *The Making of Haiti: The Saint Domingue Revolution from Below*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990.

Field, Douglas. *James Baldwin*. Tavistock, UK: Northcote, 2011.

Fisher, Tracy. *What's Left of Blackness: Feminisms, Transracial Solidarities, and the Politics of Belonging in Britain*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

——. "Rac(e)ing the Nation: Black Politics and the Thatcherite Backlash." In *What's Left of Blackness*, 93–122.

Fisk, Charles. *Returning Cycles: Contexts for the Interpretation of Schubert's Impromptus and Last Sonatas*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001.

Floyd, Kevin. *The Reification of Desire: Toward a Queer Marxism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009.

Fortier, Anne-Marie. “Pride Politics and Multiculturalist Citizenship.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 28, no. 3 (May 2005):559–78.

——. “What’s the Big Deal? Naturalisation and the Politics of Desire.” *Citizenship Studies*, vol. 17, nos. 6–7 (2013):697–711.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, *An Introduction*. New York: Vintage, 1978.

Frankowski, Alfred. “The Violence of Post-Racial Memory and the Political Sense of Mourning.” *Contemporary Aesthetics* 11 (2013).

——. “Sorrow as the Longest Memory of Neglect.” *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, vol. 28, no. 2 (2014):154–68.

Freund. David M.P. *Colored Property: State Policy and White Racial Politics in Suburban America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.

Friend, Andrew, and Andy Metcalf. *Slump City: The Politics of Mass Unemployment*. London: Pluto Press, 1981.

Fryer, Peter. *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain*. London: Pluto Press, 1984.

Fulcher, Jane F. “The Politics of Transcendence: Ideology in the Music of Messiaen in the 1930s.” *Musical Quarterly*, vol. 86, no. 3 (Autumn 2002):449–71.

Fuss, Diana. *Identification Papers*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

Ghandi, Leela. *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin-de-Siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006.

Gilroy, Paul. “Police and Thieves.” In *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain*, edited by the Centre for Contemporary Culture Studies, 143–82. London: Hutchinson and Co., 1982.

——. *“There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack”: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

——. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995.

——. “1981 and 2011: From Social Democratic to Neoliberal Rioting.” *South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. 112, no. 3 (Summer 2013):550–58.

——. "The Postracial Contemporary." In *The State of Race*, edited by Nisha Kapoor, Virinder S. Kalra, and James Rhodes, 22. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

——. *Postcolonial Melancholia*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

Gilbert, Susie. *Opera for Everybody: The Story of English National Opera.* London: Faber and Faber, 2011.

Glick, Jeremy Matthew. *The Black Radical Tragic: Performance, Aesthetics, and the Unfinished Haitian Revolution*. New York: New York University Press, 2016.

Gloag, Kenneth. *Tippett: A Child of Our Time*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

——. "Tippett's Operatic World: From *The Midsummer Marriage* to *New Year*." In *The Cambridge Companion to Michael Tippett*, edited by Kenneth Gloag and Nicholas Jones, 229–63. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Goldberg, David Theo. *The Racial State*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2002.

——. *The Threat of Race: Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2009.

——. "The Postracial Contemporary." In *The State of Race*, edited by Nisha Kapoor, Virinder S. Kalra, and James Rhodes, 15–30. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Goldstein, Joshua. "Mei Lanfang and the Nationalization of Peking Opera, 1912–1930." *positions*, vol. 7, no. 2 (1999):377–420.

——. *Drama Kings: Players and Publics in the Re-creation of Peking Opera, 1870–1937*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007.

Gooding-Williams, Robert. *In the Shadow of Du Bois: Afro-Modern Political Thought in America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010.

Gooding-Williams, Robert, and Charles W. Mills. "Race in a 'Postracial' Epoch." *Du Bois Review*, vol. 11, no. 1 (2014):1–8.

Graham, R.J.C., J.M. Norman, and D.C.S. Shearn. "Cost Effective Opera Subsidy." *The Journal of the Operational Research Society*, vol. 34, no. 10 (October 1983):953–60.

Green, Jeffrey. "'The Foremost Musician of His Race': Samuel Coleridge-Taylor of England, 1875–1912." *Black Music Research Journal*, vol. 10, no. 2 (Autumn 1990):233–52.

——. "Requiem: 'Hiawatha' in the 1920s and 1930s." *Black Music Research Journal*, vol. 21, no. 2 (Autumn 2001):283–88.

——. *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor: A Musical Life*. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011.

Greenwood, John, and Lynton Robbins, "Citizenship Tests and Education: Embedding a Concept." *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol. 55 (2002):505–22.

Griffiths, Paul. *Modern Music: The Avant Garde since 1945*. London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1981.

——. *Modern Music and After: Directions since 1945*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

——. *Olivier Messiaen and the Music of Time*. London: Faber & Faber, 2012.

Gunning, Dave, and Abigail Ward. "Tracing Black America in Black British Culture." *Atlantic Studies*, vol. 6, no. 2 (2009):149–58.

Gutzmore, Cecil. "Carnival, the State and Black Masses in the United Kingdom." In *Black British Culture and Society: A Text Reader*, edited by Kwesi Owusu. London: Routledge, 1999.

Hadley, Louisa. *Responding to Thatcher's Death.* London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Hall, Catherine. "Britain 2007: Problematising Histories." In *Imagining Transatlantic Slavery*, edited by Cora Kaplan and John Oldfield, 191–201. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Hall, Stuart. "Racism and Reaction." In *Five Views of Multi-Racial Britain: Talks on Race Relations Broadcast by BBC TV*, edited by David Lane. London: Commission for Racial Equality, 1978.

——. *The Hard Road to Renewal: Thatcherism and the Crisis of the Left*. London: Verso, 1988.

——. "New Ethnicities" [1987]. Reprinted in *Black British Cultural Studies: A Reader*, edited by Houston A. Baker, Manthia Diawara, and Ruth H. Lindeborg, 163–72. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

——. "Whose Heritage? Un-Settling 'The Heritage,' Re-Imagining the Post-Nation." *Third Text*, vol. 49 (Winter 1999–2000).

——. "The Neo-Liberal Revolution." *Cultural Studies*, vol. 25, no. 6 (2011):705–728

——. "Black Diaspora Artists in Britain: Three 'Moments' in Post-war History." *History Workshop Journal*, vol. 61 (2006):1–24.

Hall, Stuart, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke, and Brian Roberts. *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order*. London: Macmillan, 1978.

Hall-Witt, Jennifer. *Fashionable Acts: Opera and Elite Culture in London, 1780–1880*. Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2007.

Hammond Perry, Kennetta. *London Is the Place for Me: Black Britons, Citizenship, and the Politics of Race*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Harris, Clive. "Post-War Migration and the Industrial Reserve Army." In *Inside Babylon: The Caribbean Diaspora in Britain*, edited by Winston James and Clive Harris, 9–54. London: Verso, 1993.

Harris, David. "Weir – *A Night at the Chinese Opera*." *Opera News*, vol. 54, no. 6 (December 1989):65–66.

Hartford, Robert. "Opera in Britain Today." *Musical Times*, vol. 131, no. 1771 (September 1990):464–74.

Hartman, Saidiya V. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Harvey, David. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Hayes Edwards, Brent. "The 'Autonomy' of Black Radicalism." *Social Text*, vol. 19, no. 2 (Summer 2001):1–13.

——. *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003.

Hayward, Susan. "Blacks in Britain: Racial Discourse in UK Politics and Media." *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media* 41 (May 1997):49–58.

Heile, Björn. "'Transcending Quotation': Cross-Cultural Musical Representation in Mauricio Kagel's *Die Stücke der Windrose für Salonorchester*." *Music Analysis*, vol. 23, no. 1 (March 2004):57–85.

Henson, Janice. "Bernard Shaw's Contribution to the Wagner Controversy in England." *The Shaw Review*, vol. 4, no. 1 (January 1961).

Hewett, Ivan. "Judith Weir: What Tavener and Copland Taught Me." *The Telegraph* (January 10, 2008).

Hibberd, Sarah. "Grand Opera in Britain and the Americas." In *The Cambridge Companion to Grand Opera*, 403–22. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Hill, Clifford S. *How Colour Prejudiced Is Britain.* London: Victor Gollancz, 1965.

Hodlen, Philip. "Rethinking Colonial Discourse Analysis and Queer Studies." In *Imperial Desire: Dissident Sexualities and Colonial Literature*, edited by Philip Holden and Richard J. Ruppel. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

Høgsbjerg, Christian. Introduction to C.L.R. James, *Toussaint Louverture: The Story of the Only Successful Slave Revolt in History – A Play in Three Acts*, edited and introduced by Christian Høgsbjerg, 1–40; Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013.

Høgsbjerg, Christian. *C.L.R. James in Imperial Britain*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014.

Holland, Sharon Patricia. *The Erotic Life of Racism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012.

Hooker, J.R. "The Pan-African Conference 1900." *Transition*, vol. 46 (1974):20–24.

Hoover, Jean Marie. "Constructions of National Identities: Opera and Nationalism in the British Isles." Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Rochester, 1999.

Hornsey, Richard. *The Spiv and the Architect: Unruly Life in Postwar London*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

Houlden, Kate. "Andrew Salkey, James Baldwin, and the Case of the 'Leading Aberrant': Early Gay Narratives in the British Media." In *LGBT Transnational Identity and the Media*, edited by Christopher Pullen. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

——. "Andrew Salkey, the British Home, and the Intimacies In-Between." *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, vol. 15, no. 1 (2013):95–109.

House, Jim. "Colonial Racisms in the 'Métropole': Reading *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs* in Context." In *Frantz Fanon's Black Skin, White Masks: New Interdisciplinary Essays*, edited by Max Silverman, 46–73. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2005.

Hubbard, Dolan. Introduction to *The Souls of Black Folk: One Hundred Years Later*. Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2007.

Hughes, Bernard, and Judith Weir, "Judith Weir in Conversation." *Tempo*, vol. 59, no. 234 (October 2005):20–27.

Hurd, Michael. "The Glastonbury Festivals." *Musical Times*, vol. 125, no. 1698 (August 1984):435–37.

Hutcheon, Linda. *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms*. New York: Methuen, 1985.

Huysmans, Jef. *The Politics of Insecurity: Fear, Migration, and Asylum in the EU*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Ingraham, Mary, Joseph So, and Roy Moodley, eds. *Opera in a Multicultural World: Coloniality, Culture, Performance*. New York: Routledge, 2015.

Institute of Race Relations. "Anti-Racist not Multicultural Education." *Race and Class*, vol. 22, no. 1 (1980):81–83.

Irvin, George. "Inequality and Recession in Britain and the USA." *Development and Change*, vol. 42, no. 1 (January 2011):154–82.

Ivison, Duncan. "Multiculturalism as a Public Ideal." In *The Ashgate Research Companion to Multiculturalism*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012.

Jackson, Nicole M. "'A Nigger in the New England': 'Sus,' the Brixton riot, and Citizenship." *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal*, vol. 8, no. 2 (2015):158–70.

——. "Imperial Suspect: Policing Colonies within 'Post'-Imperial England." *Callaloo*, vol. 39, no. 1 (Winter 2016):203–15.

Jackson, Travis A. *Blowin' the Blues Away: Performance and Meaning on the New York Jazz Scene*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012.

Jaji, Tsitsi Ella. *Africa in Stereo: Modernism, Music, and Pan-African Solidarity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

James, C.L.R. *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, revised edition. New York: Random House, 1963.

——. "Paul Robeson: Black Star [1970]." In C.L.R. James, *Spheres of Existence: Selected Writings*, vol. 2. London: Allison & Busby, 1980.

——. *The C.L.R. James Reader*, edited by Anna Grimshaw. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1992.

James, C.L.R., and Paul Buhle. "The Making of a Literary Life: C.L.R. James Interviewed by Paul Buhle." In *C. L. R. James's Caribbean*, edited by Paget Henry and Paul Buhle, 56–62. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996.

Janjtes, Gavin. "The Long March from 'Ethnic Arts' to 'New Internationalism'" [1993]. Reprinted in *Black British Culture and Society*, 265–70.

Jean-Charles, Régine Michelle, "The Myth of Diaspora Exceptionalism: Wyclef Jean Performs *Jaspora*." *American Quarterly*, vol. 66, no. 3 (September 2014):835–52.

Jones, LeRoi. *Blues People: Negro Music in White America*. New York: HarperCollins, 1963.

Jung-en, Liu, ed. *Six Yüan Plays*. London: Penguin, 1972.

Kaisary, Philip. *The Haitian Revolution in the Literary Imagination: Radical Horizons, Conservative Constraints.* Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014.

Kapoor, Nisha. "The Advancement of Racial Neoliberalism in Britain." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 36, no. 6 (2013):1028–1046.

Kapoor, Nisha, Virinder S. Kalra, and James Rhodes. *The State of Race*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Kelley, Robin D.G. *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2002.

Kemp, Ian. *Tippett: The Composer and His Music*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Kennedy, Michael. *Britten*, rev. ed. London: J.M. Dent, 1993.

——. "Britten's Operas: 20 Years On." *Opera* 47 (September 1996):1004–11.

Kershaw, Baz. "Discouraging Democracy: British Theatres and Economics, 1979–1999." *Theatre Journal*, vol. 51, no. 3 (October 1999):267–83.

Khan, Naseem. *The Arts Britain Ignores: The Arts of Ethnic Minorities in Britain.* London: Commission for Racial Equality, 1976; revised edition, 1978.

——. "Choices for Black Arts in Britain over Thirty Years." In *Shades of Black: Assembling Black Arts in 1980s Britain*, edited by David A. Bailey, Ian Baucom, and Sonia Boyce, 115–22; 116. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005.

——. "Taking Root in Britain: The Process of Shaping Heritage." In *The Politics of Heritage: The Legacies of 'Race'*, edited by Jo Littler and Roshi Naidoo, 133–43. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Khanna, Ranjana. *Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003.

Kildea, Paul Francis. *Selling Britten: Music and the Marketplace*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

King, Nicole. "C.L.R. James, Genre and Cultural Politics." In *Beyond Boundaries: C.L.R. James and Postnational Studies*, edited by Christopher Gair, 13–38. London: Pluto Press, 2006.

——. *C.L.R. James and Creolization: Circles of Influence*. Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2011.

Kowaleski Wallace, Elizabeth. *The British Slave Trade and Public Memory*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006.

Kramer, Lawrence. "The *Lohengrin* Prelude and Anti-Anti-Semitism." *19th-Century Music*, vol. 25, nos. 2–3 (Fall/Spring 2001–2002):190–211.

Kundnani, Arun. *The End of Tolerance: Racism in 21st Century Britain*. London: Pluto Press, 2007.

Kushner, Antony Robin Jeremy. *We Europeans? Mass-Observation, 'Race' and British Identity in the Twentieth Century*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004.

Kymlicka, Will. "An Update from the Multiculturalism Wars: Comments on Shacher and Sinner-Haley." In *Multicultural Questions*, edited by Christian Joppke and Steven Lukes, 112–32. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Largey, Michael. "Visions of Vodou in African American Operas about Haiti: *Ouanga* and *Troubled Island*." *Vodou Nation: Haitian Art Music and Cultural Nationalism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006.

Lawrence, Errol. "In the Abundance of Water the Fool is Thirsty: Sociology and Black 'Pathology'." In *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain*, edited by the Centre for Contemporary Culture Studies, 95–142. London: Hutchinson and Co., 1982.

Lebrecht, Norman. *Covent Garden—The Untold Story: Dispatches from the English Culture War, 1945–2000*. London: Simon and Schuster, 2000.

——. "Michael Tippett: A Composer to Forget." *The Lebrecht Report*, December 22, 2004, <http://www.scena.org/columns/lebrecht/041222-NL-tippett.html>.

Lee, Sienho, and Jacques-Yvan Morin, *Multiculturalism and International Law: Essays in Honor of Edward McWhinney*. Leiden, Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2009.

Lei, Daphne P. *Operatic China: Staging Identity Across the Pacific*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

——. *Alternative Chinese Opera in the Age of Globalization: Performing Zero*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Lenon, Suzanne. “Hidden Hegemonies of the Rainbow: The Racialised Scaffolding of Forced Marriage and Civil Partnership in the UK.” *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, vol. 33, no. 3 (June 2012):275–87.

Lentin, Alana, and Gavan Titley. *The Crises of Multiculturalism: Racism in a Neoliberal Age*. London: Zed Books, 2011.

Lew, Nathaniel Geoffrey. “A New and Glorious Age: Constructions of National Opera in Britain, 1945–1951.” Ph.D. dissertation. University of California, Berkeley, 2001.

Lewis, Geraint. “‘New Year’ in the New World.” *The Musical Times*, vol. 130, no. 1761 (November 1989):665–69.

Lewis, Rachel. “What’s Queer about Musicology Now?” *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture*, vol. 13 (2009):43–53.

Lipsitz, George. “Breaking the Silence: The Fugees and ‘The Score’.” *Journal of Haitian Studies*, vol. 12, no. 1 (Spring 2006):4–23.

Littler, Jo. “British Heritage and the Legacies of ‘Race’.” In *The Politics of Heritage: The Legacies of Race*, edited by Jo Littler and Roshi Naidoo. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Lloyd, David. *Anomalous States: Irish Writing and the Postcolonial Moment*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993.

Lott, Eric. *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Loveland, Kenneth. “Cheltenham.” *The Musical Times*, vol. 128, no. 1735 (September 1987):507–9; 507.

Lovell, Percy. “The Proposed National Opera House at Glastonbury, 1913–15.” *Music and Letters*, vol. 50, no. 1 (January 1969):172–79.

Lowe, Lisa. *The Intimacies of Four Continents*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015.

Lu-Ting, Ho, and Han Kuo-huang. “On Chinese Scales and National Modes.” *Asian Music*, vol. 14, no. 1 (1982):132–215.

McAlister, Elizabeth A. *Rara!: Vodou, Power, and Performance in Haiti and Its Diaspora*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

McAlpin, Colin. “Britain: Her Music.” *Musical Times*, vol. 57, no. 884 (October 1, 1916):445–47.

——. “The Reality of Opera: Part I.” *Musical Times*, vol. 58, no. 891 (May 1, 1917):201–203.

——. “The Reality of Opera: Part II.” *Musical Times*, vol. 58, no. 892 (June 1, 1917):247–49.

McClary, Susan. “Constructions of Subjectivity in Schubert’s Music” [1994]. In *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*, edited by Philip Brett, Elizabeth Wood, and Gary C. Thomas, 205–33, 2nd edition. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Mcclintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest.* London: Routledge, 1995.

McCreless, Patrick. “Elgar and Theories of Chromaticism.” In *Elgar Studies*, edited by J.P.E. Harper-Scott and Julian Rushton, 1–49. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

McLaren, Peter. “Contemporary Youth Resistance Culture and the Class Struggle.” *Critical Arts*, vol. 28, no. 1 (2014):152–60.

McLeod, Ken. “Bohemian Rhapsodies: Operatic Influences on Rock Music.” *Popular Music*, vol. 20, no. 2 (May 2001):183–203.

Macey, David. *Frantz Fanon: A Biography*. New York: Verso, 2013.

Mackerras, Colin. *Chinese Drama: A Historical Survey*. Beijing, China: New World Press, 1990.

——. *Peking Opera*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Marable, Manning. *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention*. New York: Penguin, 2011.

——. *W.E.B. Du Bois: Black Radical Democrat*. New York: Routledge, 2015.

Mark, Christopher. “Opera in England: Taking the Plunge.” In *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Opera*, edited by Mervyn Cooke, 209–21; 221. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Marshall, Melanie L. “*Voce Bianca*: Purity and Whiteness in British Early Music Vocality.” *Women & Music*, vol. 19 (2015):36–44.

Marshall, Stephen H. “The Political Life of Fungibility.” *Theory & Event*, vol. 15, no. 3 (2012).

Matera, Marc. *Black London: The Imperial Metropolis and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2015.

Mauer, Bill. “Redecorating the National Economy: Keynes, Grant, and the Queering of Bretton Woods.” In *Queer Globalizations: Citizenship and the Afterlife of Colonialism*, edited by

Arnaldo Cruz-Malave and Martin F. Manalansan, 100–33. New York: New York University Press, 2002.

Mazrui, Alamin. "Language and the Quest for Liberation in Africa: The Legacy of Frantz Fanon." *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 14, no. 2 (1993):351–63.

Meadows, Laura A. "Elgar as Post-Wagnerian: A Study of Elgar's Assimilation of Wagner's Music and Methodology" (Ph.D. dissertation, Durham University, 2008).

Meehan, Kevin. "Romance and Revolution: Reading Women's Narratives of Caribbean Decolonization." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, vol. 25, no. 2 (Fall 2006):291–306.

Meer, Nasar. "Revisiting the Crossroads: Returning to *The Empire Strikes Back*." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 37, no. 10 (2014):1793–1801.

Melamed, Jodi. "The Spirit of Neoliberalism: From Racial Liberalism to Neoliberal Multiculturalism." *Social Text*, vol. 89, no. 4 (Winter 2006):1–24.

——. *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

Mellers, Wilfred. *Music in a New Found Land: Themes and Developments in the History of American Music*. London: Barrie and Rocklift, 1964.

Mercer, Kobena. "Skin Head Sex Thing: Racial Difference and the Homoerotic Imaginary." In *How Do I Look? Queer Film and Video*, edited by Bad Object-Choices, 162–222. Seattle, WA: Bay Press, 1991.

——. *Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

——. "'1968': Periodizing Politics and Identity" [1992]. In *Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Métraux, Alfred. *Voodoo in Haiti*, translated by Hugo Charteris. London: A. Deutsch, 1959.

Metzer, David. *Quotation and Cultural Meaning in Twentieth-Century Music*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Michael Tippett: A Symposium on his Sixtieth Birthday, edited by Ian Kemp. London: Faber & Faber, 1965.

Modood, Tariq. "Establishment, Multiculturalism and British Citizenship." *Political Quarterly*, vol. 65, no. 1 (January–March 1994):53–74.

——. *Multicultural Politics: Racism, Ethnicity, and Muslims in Britain*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

Moggridge, D.E. "Keynes, the Arts, and the State." *History of Political Economy*, vol. 37, no. 3 (2005):535–55.

Moon, Krystyn R. *Yellowface: Creating the Chinese in American Popular Music and Performance, 1850s–1920s*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005.

Moore, Jacqueline, M. *Leading the Race: The Transformation of the Black Elite in the Nation's Capital, 1880–1920*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1999.

Morra, Irene. *Twentieth-Century British Authors and the Rise of Opera in Britain*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007.

Mortimer-Sandilands, Catriona. "Melancholy Natures, Queer Ecologies." In *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire*, edited by Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson, 331–58. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010.

Mortimer-Sandilands, Catriona, and Bruce Erickson. Introduction, *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire*, edited by Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010.

Morton, Timothy. *Ecology Without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007.

Moten, Fred. "The Case of Blackness." *Criticism*, vol. 50, no. 2 (2008):177–218.

Mueller, Roswitha. "Learning for a New Society: *The Lehrstück*." In *The Cambridge Companion to Brecht*, edited by Peter Thomson and Glendyr Sacks, 79–95. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Muller, Benjamin J. "(Dis)qualified Bodies: Securitization, Citizenship and 'Identity Management'." *Citizenship Studies*, vol. 8, no. 3 (2004):279–94.

Müller, Sven Oliver. "The Invention of Silence: Audience Behavior in Berlin and London in the Nineteenth Century." In *Sounds of Modern History: Auditory Cultures in 19th- and 20th-Century Europe*, edited by Daniel Morat, 153–76. New York: Berghahn Books, 2014.

Murch, Donna. "The Many Meanings of Watts: Black Power, *Wattstax*, and the Carceral State." *Organization of American Historians Magazine of History*, vol. 26, vol. 1 (2012):37–40.

Naidoo, Roshi. “Never Mind the Buzzwords: ‘Race,’ Heritage and the Liberal Agenda.” In *The Politics of Heritage: The Legacies of ‘Race’*, edited by Jo Littler and Rohsi Naidoo, 36–48. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Naidoo, Roshi, and Jo Littler. “White Past, Multicultural Present: Heritage and National Stories.” In *History, Identity and the Question of Britain*, edited by Robert Philips and Helen Brocklehurst. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

Nassy Brown, Jacqueline. “The Racial State of the Everyday and the Making of Ethnic Statistics in Britain.” *Social Text*, vol. 27, no. 1 (Spring 2009):11–36.

Neal, Mark Anthony. *Looking for Leroy: Illegible Black Masculinities*. New York: New York University Press, 2013.

Nero, Charles I. “Queering *The Souls of Black Folk*.” *Public Culture*, vol. 17, no. 2 (2005):255–76.

Nielsen, Aldon Lynn. *C.L.R. James: A Critical Introduction*. Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi Press, 2010.

Nyong’o, Tavia. “Punk’d Theory.” *Social Text*, vols. 84–85, nos. 3–4 (Fall–Winter 2005):20–34.

——. *The Amalgamation Waltz: Race, Performance, and the Ruses of Memory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009.

——. “Back to the Garden: Queer Ecology in Samuel Delany’s Heavenly Breakfast.” *American Literary History*, vol. 24, no. 4 (Winter 2012):747–67.

——. “‘Rip It Up’: Excess and Ecstasy in Little Richard’s Sound.” In *Black Performance Theory*, edited by Thomas F. DeFrantz and Anita Gonzalez, 169–83. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

——, “Afro-philo-sonic Fictions: Black Sound Studies after the Millenium.” *Small Axe,* vol. 18, no. 2 (July 2014):173–79.

Oldfield, John. *Chords of Freedom: Commemoration, Ritual and British Transatlantic Slavery*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007.

Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 3rd ed. New York: Routledge, 2015.

Ong, Aihwa. “On the Edge of Empires: Flexible Citizenship among Chinese in Diaspora.” *positions*, vol. 1, no. 3 (Winter 1993):745–78.

——. *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006.

Orilla Scott, Lynn. "Challenging the American Conscience, Re-Imagining American Identity: James Baldwin and the Civil Rights Movement." In *A Historical Guide to James Baldwin*, edited by Douglas Field, 141–76. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Ou, Hsin-yun. "Four Epistles Concerning *The Orphan of China*." *Notes and Queries*, vol. 54, no. 1 (2007):65–68.

Owusu, Kwesi. *The Struggle for Black Arts in Britain: What Can We Consider Better Than Freedom*. London: Comedia, 1986.

Pang, Celica J. "(Re)cycling Culture: Chinese Opera in the United States." *Comparative Drama*, vol. 39, nos. 3–4 (Fall 2005):361–96.

Parker, David. "The Chinese Takeaway and the Diasporic Habitus: Space, Time and Power Geometries." In *Un/Settled Multiculturalisms: Diasporas, Entanglements, 'Transruptions'*, edited by Barnor Hesse, 73–95. London and New York: Zed Books, 2000.

Paton, Diana. "Interpreting the Bicentenary in Britain." *Slavery & Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies*, vol. 30, no. 2 (2009):277–89.

Paul, Kathleen. *Whitewashing Britain: Race and Citizenship in the Postwar Era*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997.

Peacock, D. Keith. *Thatcher's Theatre: British Theatre and Drama in the Eighties*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999.

Pellegrini, Ann. *Performance Anxieties: Staging Psychoanalysis, Staging Race*. New York: Routledge, 1997.

Pennybacker, Susan D. "The Universal Races Congress, London Political Culture, and Imperial Dissent, 1900–1939." *Radical History Review*, vol. 92 (Spring 2005):203–17.

Pereen, Esther. "Carnival Politics and the Territories of the Street." In *Constellations of the Transnational: Modernity, Culture, Critique*, edited by Sudeep Dasgupta, and Esther Peeren, 69–82. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007.

Peraino, Judith A. "I Am an Opera: Identifying with Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*." In *En Travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera*, edited by Corinne E. Blackmer and Patricia Juliana Smith, 99–131. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

Phillips-Matz, Mary Jane. *Puccini: A Biography*. Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 2002.

Platt, Norman. *Making Music*. London: Pembles, 2001.

Pirker, Eva Ulrike. *Narrative Projections of a Black British History.* New York: Routledge, 2011.

Posnock, Ross. *Color and Culture: Black Writers and the Making of the Modern Intellectual*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998.

——. "How It Feels to Be a Problem: Du Bois, Fanon, and the 'Impossible Life' of the Black Intellectual." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 23, no. 2 (Winter 1997):323–49.

Potter, Robert B., and Joan Phillips. "Both Black and Symbolically White: The 'Bajan-Brit' Return Migrant as Post-Colonial Hybrid." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 29, no. 5 (2005):901–27.

Pramar, Pratibha. "Gender, Race and Class: Asian Women in Resistance." In *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain*, edited by The Centre for Contemporary Culture Studies, 236–75. London: Hutchinson and Co, 1982.

Puchner, Martin. *Stage Fright: Modernism, Anti-Theatricality, and Drama*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002.

Radano, Ronald. "Black Music Labor and the Animated Properties of Slave Sound." *boundary 2,* vol. 43, no. 1 (2016):173–208.

Ranger, Terence. "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa." In *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric J. Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger, 211–62. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Rattansi, Ali. "On Being and Not Being Brown/Black-British: Racism, Class, Sexuality and Ethnicity in Post-Imperial Britain." *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1 (2000):118–34.

Redclift, Victoria. "New Racisms, New Racial Subjects? The Neo-Liberal Moment and the Racial Landscape of Contemporary Britain." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 37, no. 4 (2014):577–88.

Reed, Anthony. "After the End of the World: Run Ra and the Grammar of Utopia," in *Black Camera*, vol. 5, no. 1 (Fall 2013):118–39.

Rhodes, James. "Revisiting the 2001 Riots: New Labour and the Rise of 'Colour Blind Racism'." *Sociological Research Online*, vol. 14, no. 5 (2009).

Richards, David A.J. *The Rise of Gay Rights and the Fall of the British Empire: Liberal Resistance and the Bloomsbury Group*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Richards, Paul. "A Pan-African Composer? Coleridge-Taylor and Africa." *Black Music Research Journal*, vol. 21, no. 2 (Autumn 2001):235–60.

Richardson, Matt. "'My Father Didn't Have a Dick': Social Death and Jackie Kay's *Trumpet*." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies,* vol. 8, nos. 2–3 (2012):361–79.

Richmond, Anthony H. *The Colour Problem: A Study of Colour Prejudice, Racial Discrimination, and Social Separation, with an Account of Racial Relations and the "Colour-Bar" in Britain and Commonwealth Territories in Africa and the West Indies* (London: Penguin, 1955).

Roach, Joseph. *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

Robinson, Cedric J. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* [1983], 2nd edition. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000.

Robinson, Suzanne. "The Pattern from the Palimpsest: Convergences of Eliot, Tippett, and Shakespeare." In *T.S. Eliot's Orchestra: Critical Essays on Poetry and Music*, edited by John Xiros Cooper, 149–17. New York: Garland, 2000.

——. "From Agitprop to Parable: A Prolegomenon to *A Child of Our Time*." In *Michael Tippett: Music and Literature*, edited by Suzanne Robinson, 78–121. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate: 2002.

——. "'Coming Out to Oneself': Encodings of Homosexuality Identity from the First String Quartet to *The Heart's Assurance*." In *The Cambridge Companion to Michael Tippett*, edited by Kenneth Gloag and Nicholas Jones, 86–102. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Rodmell, Paul. *Opera in the British Isles, 1875–1918*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013.

Rosen, David. "'La Solita forma' in Puccini's Operas?." *Studi pucciniani*, vol. 3 (2004):179–99.

Ross, Alex. "Black Wagner." *The Rest Is Noise*, January 2, 2103. http://www.therestisnoise.com/2013/01/black-wagner-and-the-rest-is-noise.html

Rowbotham, Sheila, Lynne Segal, Hilary Wainwright, and Pragna Patel. "After Thatcher: Still Trying to Piece It All Together." *Soundings: A Journal of Politics and Culture*, vol. 56 (Spring 2014):143–57.

Rupprecht, Philip. "'Something Slightly Indecent': British Composers, the European Avant-Garde, and National Stereotypes in the 1950s." *Musical Quarterly*, vol. 91, nos. 3–4 (2009):275–326.

Rush, Anne. "Reshaping British History: The Historiography of West Indians in Britain in the Twentieth Century." *History Compass*, vol. 5, no. 2 (March 2007):463–84.

Rushdie, Salman. "The New Empire within Britain." *New Society*, vol. 62, no. 1027 (1982):129–38.

Rushton, Julian. *W.A. Mozart: Don Giovanni*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Safia Mirza, Heidi. "'Harvesting Our Collective Intelligence': Black British Feminism in Post-Race Times." *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol. 51 (2015):1–9.

Said, Edward. *Musical Elaborations*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.

——. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993.

——, *Orientalism* [1978]. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.

Sales, William W., Jnr. "The Legacy of Malcolm X." In *The Cambridge Companion to Malcolm X*, edited by Robert Terrill, 177–84. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Saylor, Eric. "Race, 'Realism,' and Fate in Frederick Delius's *Koanga*." In *Blackness in Opera*, edited by Naomi André, Karen M. Bryan, and Eric Saylor, 78–100. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012.

Schaffer, Gavin. "Legislating against Hatred: Meaning and Motive in Section Six of the Race Relations Act of 1965." *Twentieth Century British History*, vol. 25, no. 2 (2013): 251–275.

——. *The Vision of a Nation: Making Multiculturalism on British Television, 1960–80*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Schneer, Jonathan. *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999.

Schuttenhelm, Thomas, *The Selected Letters of Michael Tippett* (London: Faber & Faber: 2005).

——. *The Orchestral Music of Michael Tippett*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Schwarz, Bill. "'Claudia Jones and the *West Indian Gazette*': Reflections on the Emergence of Post-Colonial Britain." *Twentieth Century British History*, vol. 14, no. 3 (2003):264–85.

——. "C.L.R. James's *American Civilization*." In *Beyond Boundaries*, edited by Christopher Gair, 128–56. London: Pluto Press, 2006.

Scott, Darieck. "Jungle Fever? Black Gay Identity, White Dick, and the Utopian Bedroom." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, vol. 1, issue 3 (1994):299–321; 301.

Scott, David. *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004.

——. "On the Very Idea of a Black Radical Tradition." *Small Axe*, vol. 17, no. 1 (March 2013):1–6; 1.

Scott, Joan W. "Multiculturalism and the Politics of Identity." *October*, vol. 61 (1992):12–19.

Self, Geoffrey. *The Hiawatha Man: The Life and Work of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor*. Aldershot, UK: Scholars' Press, 1995.

Service, Tom. "Thelma: An Opera World Premiere." *Guardian*, February 7, 2012. http://www.theguardian.com/music/tomserviceblog/2012/feb/07/thelma-samuel-coleridge-taylor-s-operatic-magnum-opus-rediscovered-in-croydon.

Sexton, Jared. "The Social Life of Social Death: On Afro-Pessimism and Black Optimism." *Tensions*, vol. 5 (Fall/Winter 2001).

——. "People-of-Color-Blindness: Notes on the Afterlife of Slavery." *Social Text*, vol. 28, no. 2 (2010):31–56.

Shavers, Rone. "Fear of a Performative Planet: Troubling the Concept of 'Post-Blackness'." In *The Trouble with Post-Blackness*, edited by Houston A. Baker and K. Merinda Simmons, 81–92. New York: University of Columbia Press, 2015.

Shaw, Roy. "An Adjunct to the Advertising Business?" *The Political Quarterly*, vol. 61, no. 4 (October 1990):375–80.

Sheppard, W. Anthony. "Blurring the Boundaries: Tan Dun's *Tinte* and *The First Emperor*." *Journal of Musicology*, vol. 26, no. 3 (Summer 2009):285–326.

——. "Orientalism in the Postmodern Operas of Adams and Sellars." In *Representation in Western Music*, edited by Joshua S. Walden, 267–86. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Shreffler, Anne C. "'Music Left and Right': A Tale of Two Histories of Progressive Music." In *Red Strains: Music and Communism Outside the Communist Bloc*, edited by Robert Adlington, 67–88. Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academic, 2013.

Simeone, Nigel. "A Chronology of Twentieth-Century Operatic Premiers." In Mervyn Cooke, *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Opera*, xviii–xlvii. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Sivanandan, Ambalavaner. "Anti-Racist Not Multicultural Education." *Race & Class*, vol. 22, no. 4 (1980):331–52.

——. "Black Power: The Politics of Existence." *Politics and Society* (February 1971):225–33.

——. *A Different Hunger: Writings on Black Resistance*. London: Pluto Press, 1982.

——. "From Resistance to Rebellion: Asian and Afro-Caribbean Struggles in Britain" [1981]. Reprinted in *Catching History on the Wing: Race, Culture and Globalisation*. London: Pluto Press, 2008.

——. "The Liberation of the Black Intellectual" [1974]. In *Catching History on the Wing: Race, Culture and Globalisation*, 3–18. London: Pluto Press, 2008.

——. "Race, Class, and the State: The Political Economy of Immigration [1976]." In *Catching History on the Wing: Race, Culture and Globalisation*, 65–89. London: Pluto Press, 2008.

Sinclair, Andrew. *Arts and Cultures: The History of the 50 Years of the Arts Council of Great Britain*. London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1995.

Singh, Nikhil Pal. *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005.

Slater, Tom. "From 'Criminality' to Marginality: Rioting against a Broken State." *Human Geography*, vol. 4, no. 3 (2011), n.p.

Smartt Bell, Madison. *Toussaint L'Ouverture: A Biography*. New York: Pantheon, 2007.

Smith, Anna Marie. *New Right Discourse on Race and Sexuality: Britain, 1968–1990.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Smith, Laurajane, Geoff Cubitt, Kalliopi Fouseki, and Ross Wilson, eds. *Representing Enslavement and Abolition in Museums: Ambiguous Engagements*. New York: Routledge, 2011.

Smith, S. J. "Political Interpretations of 'Racial Segregation' in Britain." *Environment and Planning D: Society & Space*, vol. 6 (December 1988):423–44.

St-Jean Kufour, Karen. "Black Britain's Economic Power, Myth or Reality? An Empirical Review and Analysis of the Economic Reality of Black Britain." In *Black British Culture and Society: A Text Reader*, edited by Kwesi Owusu, 352–60. London: Routledge, 1999.

Solomos, John. *Race and Racism in Contemporary Britain*. London: Macmillan, 1989.

——. *Black Youth, Racism and the State: The Politics of Ideology and Policy*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Solomos, John, Bob Findlay, Simon Jones, and Paul Gilroy. "The Organic Crisis of British Capitalism and Race: The Experience of the Seventies." in *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain*, edited by the Centre for Contemporary Culture Studies, 9–46. London: Hutchinson and Co., 1982.

Soon Lee, Tong. "Grace Liu and Cantonese Opera in England: Becoming Chinese Overseas." In *Lives in Chinese Music*, edited by Helen Rees, 119–43. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2009.

Spillers, Hortense J. "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book." *Diacritics*, vol. 17, no. 2 (Summer 1987):64–81.

Stannard, Iain. "Hermaphrodism and the Masculine Body: Tippett's Aesthetic Views in a Gendered Context." In *Masculinity and Western Musical Practice*, edited by Ian D. Biddle and Kirsten Gibson, 279–304. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2009.

Stephens, Michelle. "New Points of Recognition: Stuart Hall's Gift to the Study of Blackness." *Small Axe,* vol. 19, no. 1 (2015):88–99.

Stevenson, Robert. "The First Dated Mention of the Sarabande." *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, vol. 5, no. 1 (Spring 1952):29–31.

Stinson, Elizabeth. "Means of Detection: A Critical Archiving of Black Feminism and Punk Performance." *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory,* vol. 22, nos. 2–3 (2012):275–311.

Stockwell, A.J. "Leaders, Dissidents and the Disappointed: Colonial Students in Britain as Empire Ended." *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 36, no. 3 (September 2007):487–507.

Stoler, Laura Ann. "Intimidations of Empire: Predicaments of the Tactile and Unseen." In *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History*, edited by Laura Ann Stoler, 1–22. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006.

——. *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*, 2nd edition. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010.

Stone, Judy S.J. "Curtain Rise: The Pioneers of West Indian Theatre 1900–1950: Errol Hill." In *Theatre*, edited by Judy S.J. Stone, 16–31. London: Macmillan, 1994.

Stott, Cliff, and Steve Reicher, *Mad Mobs and Englishmen? Myths and Realities of the 2011 Riots*. London: Little Brown Book Group, 2011.

Stratton, Jon, and Nabeel Zuberi. Introduction to *Black Popular Music in Britain since 1945,* edited by Jon Stratton and Nabeel Zuberi, 1-10. Burlingon, VT: Ashgate, 2016.

Street, Joe. "Malcolm X, Smethwick, and the Influence of the African American Freedom Struggle on British Race Relations in the 1960s." *Journal of Black Studies*, vol. 38, no. 6 (July 2008):932–50.

Stucky, Steven. *Lutosławski and His Music*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Sutton, Emma. *Aubrey Beardsley and British Wagnerism in the 1880s*. Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 2002.

Sweeney, Fionnghuala. "'The Haitian Play: C.L.R. James' *Toussaint Louverture* (1936)." *International Journal of Francophone Studies*, vol. 14, nos. 1–2 (2011):143–63.

Taruskin, Richard. "Sacred Entertainments." *Cambridge Opera Journal*, vol. 15, no. 2 (July 2003):109–26; 121.

——. *The Oxford History of Western Music*, vol. 4, *Music in the Early Twentieth Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Taylor, Benedict. "Sullivan, Scott and *Ivanhoe*: Constructing Historical Time and National Identity in Victorian Opera." *Nineteenth-Century Music Review*, vol. 9 (2012):295–321.

Taylor, Paul C. "After Race, After Justice, After History." *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 47 (2009):25–41.

——. "Taking Postracialism Seriously: From Movement Mythology to Racial Formation." *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*, vol. 11, no. 1 (Spring 2014):9–25.

Taylor-Jay, Claire. *The Artist-Operas of Pfitzner, Krenek, and Hindemith: Politics and the Ideology of the Artist*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004.

Taylor Thompson, Jewel. *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor: The Development of His Compositional Style.* Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1994.

Thomas, Abdul R. “Celebrating the Life of Sierra Leone’s Ingenious Classical Music Composer, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor.” *Sierra Leone Telegraph*, January 29, 2012, http://www.thesierraleonetelegraph.com/?p=1011.

Thorpe, Ashley. “Only Joking? The Relationship between the Clown and Percussion in *Jingju*.” *Asian Theatre Journal*, vol. 22, no. 2 (Fall 2005):269–92.

Thurman, Kira. “Black Venus, White Bayreuth: Race, Sexuality, and the Depoliticization of Wagner in Postwar Germany.” *German Studies Review*, vol. 35, no. 3 (October 2014):607–26.

Tibbles, Anthony. “Facing Slavery’s Past: The Bicentenary of the Abolition of the British Slave Trade.” *Slavery & Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies*, vol. 29, no. 2 (2008):293–303.

Tippett, Michael. “The Nameless Hero: Reflections on *A Child of Our Time*,” 188. BBC Radio, April 22, 1950, reprinted in *Music of the Angels.*

——. *Moving into Aquarius*, 2nd edition. London: Paladin, 1974.

——. *Music of the Angels: Essays and Sketchbooks of Michael Tippett*. London: Eulenburg Books, 1980.

——. *Those Twentieth Century Blues: An Autobiography*. London: Hutchinson, 1991.

Tomlinson, Gary. *Metaphysical Song: An Essay on Opera*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999.

——. “Parahuman Wagnerism.” *Opera Quarterly*, vol. 29, nos. 3–4 (Summer–Autumn 2013):186–202.

Tortolano, William. *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor: Anglo-Black Composer, 1875–1912*, 2nd ed. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2002.

Toynbee, Jason, and Catherine Tackley. *Black British Jazz: Routes, Ownership and Performance.* London: Routledge, 2016.

Travis, Alan. “Thatcher Government Toyed with Evacuating Liverpool after 1981 Riots.” *The Guardian*, December 29, 2011, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2011/dec/30/thatcher-government-liverpool-riots-1981>.

Tuck, Stephen. “Malcolm X’s Visit to Oxford University: U.S. Civil Rights, Black Britain, and the Special Relationship on Race.” *The American Historical Review*, vol. 118, no. 1 (2013):76–103.

Turner, Kristen M. “Class, Race, and Uplift in the Opera House: Theodore Drury and His Company Cross the Color Line.” *Journal of Musicological Research*, vol. 34, no. 4 (2015):320–51.

Tyler, Imogen. “Designed to Fail: A Biopolitics of British Citizenship.” *Citizenship Studies*, vol. 14, no. 1 (February 2010):61–74.

Ukaegbu, Victor. “Talawa Theatre Company: The “Likkle” Matter of Black Creativity and Representation on the British Stage.” In *Alternatives within the Mainstream: British Black and Asian Theatres*, edited by Dimple Godiwala, 123–52. Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006.

Uno Everett, Yayoi. “Intercultural Synthesis in Postwar Western Art Music: Historical Contexts, Perspectives, Taxonomy.” In *Locating East Asia in Western Art Music*, edited by Yayoi Uno Everett and Frederick Lau, 1–21. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004.

Upchurch, Anna. “John Maynard Keynes, the Bloomsbury Group and the Origins of the Arts Council Movement.” *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, vol. 10, no. 2 (July 2004):203–17.

Vogel, Hans Ulrich. *Marco Polo Was in China: New Evidence from Currencies, Salts and Revenues*. Leiden, Netherlands and Boston, MA: Brill, 2013.

Wakeling, D.W. “The Knot Garden.” *Opera Quarterly*, vol. 3, no. 4 (1985):92–94.

Wales, Jenny. *Life in the United Kingdom: A Guide for New Residents*, 3rd ed. Norwich, UK: TSO, on behalf of the Home Office, 2013.

Ward, Brian. *Just My Soul Responding: Rhythm and Blues, Black Consciousness, and Race Relations*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

Warmington, Paul. *Black British Intellectuals and Education: Multiculturalism’s Hidden History*. New York: Routledge, 2014.

Warrack, John. “The Knot Garden.” *The Musical Times*, vol. 111, no. 1533 (November 1970):1092–95.

Weber, William. “Redefining the Status of Opera: London and Leipzig, 1800–1848.” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, vol. 36, no. 3 (Winter 2006):507–32.

Webster, Wendy. *Englishness and Empire: 1939–1965*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Weesner, Anna Theresa. "Tonality in Nontonal Music: A Study of Judith Weir's *The Consolations of Scholarship*." DMA Dissertation, Cornell University, 1995.

Weheliye, Alexander G. "In the Mix: Hearing the Souls of Black Folk." *Amerikastudien/American Studies*, vol. 45, no. 4 (2000):535–54.

——. "The Grooves of Temporality." *Public Culture*, vol. 17, no. 2 (2005):319–38.

Weir, Judith. *A Night at the Chinese Opera.* London: Novello, 1987.

——. "A Note on a Chinese Opera." *Musical Times*, vol. 128, no. 1733 (July 1987):373–75.

——. "Memoirs of an Accidental Film Artist." In *A Night in at the Opera: Media Representations of Opera*, edited by Jeremy Tambling, 53–60. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994.

Wen-Chung, Chou. "Asian Concepts and Twentieth-Century Western Composers." *Musical Quarterly*, vol. 57, no. 2 (April 1971):211–29.

White, Barbara. "Music Drama on the Concert Stage: Voice, Character and Performance in Judith Weir's The Consolations of Scholarship." *Cambridge Opera Journal*, vol. 12, no. 1 (March 2000):55–79.

White, Eric Walter. *The Arts Council of Great Britain*. London: Davis-Poynter, 1975.

——. *Tippett and his Operas*. London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1979.

White, Patricia. "Immigrants into Citizens." *Political Quarterly*, vol. 79, no. 2 (April–June 2008):221–31.

Whitehouse, Anne. "Festivals: Celebrating the Best of British." *The Times* (March 21, 1987).

——. "Arts: Cheltenham Music Festival." *The Financial Times* (May 15, 1987).

Wichmann, Elizabeth. *Listening to Theatre: The Aural Dimensions of Beijing Opera*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991.

Wiebe, Heather. "Benjamin Britten, the 'National Faith,' and the Animation of History in 1950s England." *representations*, vol. 93 (Winter 2006):76–105.

——. *Britten's Unquiet Pasts: Sound and Memory in Postwar Reconstruction*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Wiegold, Peter, and Ghislaine Kenyon, eds. *Beyond Britten: The Composer and the Community*. Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2015.

Wild, Rosalind Eleanor. "'Black Was the Colour of Our Fight': Black Power in Britain, 1955–1976" (Ph.D. dissertation: University of Sheffield, 2008).

Wilder, Gary. "Race, Reason, and Impasse: Césaire, Fanon, and the Legacy of Emancipation." *Radical History Review*, vol. 90 (Fall 2004):31–61.

Wilderson, Frank B. *Red, White and Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008.

Williams, Raymond. "Politics and Policies: The Case of the Arts Council." In *Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists*. London: Verso, 1989.

——. "Culture Is Ordinary [1958]." In *Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism*, 37–48. London: Verso, 1989.

Wilson, Alexandra. "Killing Time: Contemporary Representations of Opera in British Culture." *Cambridge Opera Journal*, vol. 19, no. 3 (November 2007):249–70.

Wilson, Ross. "Remembering to Forget? The BBC Abolition Season and Media Memory of Britain's Transatlantic Slave Trade." *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, vol. 28, no. 3 (2008):391–403.

Wood, Andy. "'Original London Style': London Posse and the Birth of British Hip Hop." *Atlantic Studies: Global Currents,* vol 6, no. 2 (2009):175–90.

Wright, David. "Weir to Now?: David Wright Explores the Fastidious Musical World of Judith Weir." *The Musical Times*, vol. 134, no. 1806 (August 1993):432–37.

Wright, David C.H. "Weir, Judith." *Grove Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed June 7, 2016, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/46315.

Wright, Michelle M. *Physics of Blackness: Beyond the Middle Passage Epistemology*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015.

Wu-Chi, Liu. "The Original Orphan of China." *Comparative Literature*, vol. 5, no. 3 (Summer 1953):193–212.

Wu, Chin-Tao. *Privatising Culture: Corporate Art Intervention since the 1980s*. London: Verso, 2002.

Wynn, Neil A. "'Why I Sing the Blues': African American Culture in the Transatlantic World." In *Cross the Water Blues: African American Music in Europe*, edited by Neil A. Wynn, 8. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2007.

Yingde, Guo. “An Overview of Research on Classical Chinese Drama in North America (1998–2008).” *Asian Theatre Journal*, vol. 27, no. 1 (Spring 2010):149–71.

Young, Harvey. *Embodying Black Experience: Stillness, Critical Memory, and the Black Body*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010.

Young, Robert J.C. *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*. London: Routledge, 1995.

Yunwha Rao, Nancy. “Hearing Pentatonicism through Serialism: Integrating Different Traditions in Chinese Contemporary Music.” *Perspectives of New Music*, vol. 40, no. 2 (Summer 2002):190–231.

Yuval-Davis, Nira, Floya Anthias, and Eleonore Kofman. “Secure Borders and Safe Haven and the Gendered Politics of Belonging: Beyond Social Cohesion.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 28, no. 3 (2005):513–35.

Zabus, Chantal. *Tempests after Shakespeare*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.

Zeigler, James. *Red Scare Racism and Cold War Black Radicalism*. Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2015.

Žižek, Slavoj. “Multiculturalism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Multinational Capital.” *New Left Review*, vol. 225 (September 1997):28–51.